SPECULATING IN FUTURES

LUTHER E. LOVEJOY

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

STEWARDSHIP FOR ALL OF LIFE

SPECULATING IN FUTURES

Adventures in Stewardship

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Introduction by
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To My Wife

FAITHFUL STEWARD
OF EVERY TRUST

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INTRODUCTION

THE following pages give a human and concrete study of stewardship. I am not ready to discard the word "study" here, and apparently lower the meaning by substituting another word. There is the highest example for personalizing truth: "A certain man had two sons"; "There were ten virgins"; "A wise man which built his house upon a rock"; "To one he gave five talents" —these words do not give us impossible pictures of abstractions. They are in individualistic terms; yet they present us studies in the highest life.

So do the succeeding chapters. In a way they make a moving picture, in two good senses! Some of us have known the heroes and heroines; and we recognize them even though they are treated anonymously. As we read, we catch sight of the faces and we hear the voices of men and women who lived under the sense of the divine ownership and of the human stewardship. Lessees they were, waiting for the eviction into the better land; trustees they were, waiting for the discharge from their earthly trust; talent-holders they were, waiting for the coming of their Lord. Living in this mood of holy obligation, they died in the repute of faithfulness; and God gave them the promised rulership over many things.

There is an American reason for a treatise of this sort. Even as I write I have before me a table of national wealth. The figures are staggering and bewildering. The United States leads, appallingly! Add together the wealth of the five nations that follow in the order of their riches, and the combined figures fall about seven billion dollars short of what our republic now owns! That wealth puts us on probation. It may prove to be what Ruskin called "illth." It may even bring with it the concentrated curses of Lot, and Achan, and Gehazi, and the Gadarenes, and the Philippians, and Simon Magus, and Judas Iscariot! There are in it sufficient numbers of thirty pieces of silver to lead to myriad betrayals of Jesus Christ! Or there are in it all sufficient units of "the mammon of unrighteousness" to populate the gates of the eternal tabernacles with myriad welcomers! And the people of our church must help to make the momentous choice! One feels like crying out, "God help them!"

Of course, the personal application is as sure as the national. We all feel a security about our young people when they become "good stewards." Inasmuch as money has its own strange lure, a consecration of it to the work of God indicates something deeply fixed in the soul. But it is more than a symbol of present dedication; it is a promise of growing spirituality. There is great authority for the statement that the heart follows the treasure! How often have we seen just

that! The money goes in a sacred direction, and the spirit follows. If the way to the pocketbook is through the heart, it is quite as true in a minor and yet good sense that the way to the heart is through the pocketbook. God honors the trips that are taken in both of those directions!

For a considerable period the author of this book has studied and planned and labored to form a wholesome doctrine of stewardship. If better literature on the subject has ever been produced, I am not able to name the volumes. This study will, therefore, be welcomed by those who are truly anxious both for the spread of God's kingdom over the earth and for the shedding abroad of the divine love into the hearts of all genuine givers.

EDWIN H. HUGHES.

PREFACE

THE purpose of these pages is to present a few concrete illustrations, from the actual experience of individuals and churches, of the various phases of that Christian stewardship whose underlying principles I endeavored to set forth in my *Stewardship for All of Life,* and to which the religious public gave so gratifying and gracious response. The former volume has largely to do with the theory of this great doctrine; this present one of its application to practical life. In addition I have sought to give some account of the growth and progress of the stewardship movement in the churches.

It is my sincere hope that these instances of stewardship living may commend themselves as so simple, obvious, and genuine that they will at once prove entertaining to the individual reader and the family circle, useful as illustrative material for sermons and addresses, inspiring matter for reading contests, and practical lessons for study classes. Some readers may wish that the stewardship of money had been given larger relative emphasis; others will be glad of the broader treatment. To some the stewardship implication here and there may seem remote. This may arise from our long habit of restricting the meaning of stewardship to material things. Let it not be forgotten that

the principle of stewardship, once admitted, finds no resting place until all the resources of life are laid under tribute.

No apology is offered for having drawn the major portion of my illustrative material from the religious communion with which I happen to be best acquainted, since Christian experience is the common possession of all disciples; neither is any offered for the generous proportion of experiences personal to the author. In a world where philosophers unblushingly publish large volumes of their private speculations, scientists display their own discoveries, poets unfold their dreams, novelists recount the adventures of imaginary heroes, and editors daily, for decades on end, retail their personal opinions for public consumption, surely the common man may, without blushing, set forth such experiences as have come within his own observation as an innocent bystander, and assume that all who are interested in the tragic phenomena of human life will be measurably interested and enlightened, irrespective of the personality of the observer. It is at least with such a hope as this that these observations on the stewardship of life, in its rich and varied phases, are offered to the Christian public.

Chicago. L. E. L.

CHAPTER I

SPECULATING IN FUTURES

SHOULD you ask your banker—granted that you can afford to have one—if speculating in futures is a safe and sane practice for average Americans, he would probably shake his head, look at you with a wry smile, and answer sagely as follows: "Speculating always involves a high degree of risk, is never really safe, and should be indulged in only by those who can afford to lose what they invest, in case the venture goes wrong. Speculating in futures is still worse. It is one of the most hazardous of all forms of investing, and is fit only for those who are frankly willing to gamble with their money."

If, now, you should persist in your questioning and say: "But I know a man who has just invested a thousand dollars in such a venture, and taken out fifty thousand, and he's a shrewd business man too," your banker would probably reply: "Well, he was an uncommonly lucky dog, or else he knew a lot more about the affair than he has told you."

When it comes to faith, there are speculations so unwarranted, so hazardous, that no ordinary judgment could possibly approve them, and in the eyes of all "the wisdom of this world" they are but folly and delusion; yet, for those who are

gripped by this faith, and know without a peradventure the solid rock on which it is founded, the speculation ceases to be hazard and becomes a sound and sure investment, worthy of the highest wisdom.

On the 20th of May, 1927, Charles A. Lindbergh was, to the vast majority of his American compatriots, the "flying fool." At the best he was only "Lucky Lindy." On May 21 he was a world hero, the pluckiest and canniest of all our daring bird-men. He had taken a chance no other man thought wise, no other man dared take; but he knew his science, his skill, his plane, his motor, his endurance, and for him it was an act of reasonable faith, founded on substantial realities, as the world now acknowledges.

To the men of his day Columbus was an idiot or a lunatic; and so were Washington, and Fulton, and James Watt, and Orville Wright; until each had demonstrated that his faith was built on something more substantial than conjecture. And what must have been the misgivings of Abraham's neighbors, when he packed his camels for Canaan, of Moses' relatives when he renounced Pharaoh's crown, and of the wise men of Tarsus when Saul cut loose from the Sanhedrin and struck the trail of the Nazarene!

Among the many friends of Jesus to-day are a few royal souls, scattered here and there—doubtless many more than any of us realize—who are taking chances which no honest banker could approve, and investing the very best treas-

ure they possess—time, money, talent, influence, love, service—in that which gives no slightest visible assurance of return. But, like Lindbergh, and Columbus, and Watt, they know the solidity of that upon which they rely; like Paul, they "know whom they have believed," and, like Moses, they are not afraid to "endure as seeing him who is invisible."

1. A Plunger From the North Woods

"MacDonald, we're goin' to run you for city treasurer," said the local boss of the Republican party. "It'll mean twelve hundred dollars salary for three months' work. That'll keep you alive till your insurance business gets on its feet. The convention's to-morrow night. Will you run?"

No mistaking what that meant: it meant that Bill MacDonald would make a handsome "figure-head." The present treasurer had been in office but a year, he had done his job well, and, according to all precedent, was sure of re-election.

Bill swallowed hard. This was pretty sudden. He sensed that there wasn't a ghost of a chance for election, and the campaign assessment would be sixty hard-earned dollars—money thrown away. But business was bad, he was young and inexperienced, his new insurance enterprise was on the rocks; maybe the advertising would be worth the sacrifice.

"All right," he said, "I'll run." After that, leave it to Bill to make the campaign lively.

Late on election night all the politicians were

gathered in the courthouse to receive the returns. The first six wards had reported, and Bill and his opponent were running neck and neck—not ten votes between them. The remaining ward, "the Bloody Seventh," was still out. That meant only one thing—Bill's defeat. For the "Seventh" was thoroughly committed to another political party. Anybody who represented that party could count on a majority of from three to five hundred from that ward. Besides, the ward was populated largely by people of foreign birth and of a different religion, and the ward was politically wetter than Lake Michigan. Besides, the treasurer had just spent a lot of good money making friends in the seventh-ward saloons. What chance for success was there here for a "dry" native American Protestant Republican in a ward where such conditions prevailed?

So the ward was conceded to the other party. MacDonald's friends expressed their regrets, and everybody started home. Just at that moment in rushed one of Bill's friends, a Republican from the seventh ward, with the astounding news that MacDonald had carried the seventh by several hundred votes. It was beyond belief! How on earth did it ever happen?

It happened because in that ward lived "a certain widow," a Polish woman, whose poverty-stricken widowhood, home, and orphaned children had ten years before touched Bill's kindly heart and been saved from destitution and ruin by his thoughtfulness. To-day that thoughtful-

ness had proved itself "bread cast upon the waters," for that humble Polish widow had her faithful Polish friends, and every friend a chain of friends, and on this fateful day racial prejudice, religion, politics, appetite, had all stood aside while a multitude of determined men, "with malice toward none," but a lot of charity for Bill, had walked up to their election booth to offer to our friend a silent but tremendous tribute of gratitude and love. "The work of that widow saved my business career," declares Bill to this day. He was re-elected for two succeeding terms, by which time his own business was well established.

But the tale of this Polish woman's gratitude is hardly yet complete. Ten years before this election day, during Bill's first youthful struggle for existence, he was employed in a lumber mill office in a little northern Michigan city. One of his duties was a daily visit to the salt plant. The boss of the Polish "salt lifters" was an undersized Pole, deficient in English but gifted with a genial smile. He and Bill soon became the best of friends. His growing family—a baby each year—lived in a shanty near the office. The wife, innocent of English but appreciative of attention shown her children, also became very friendly. About three years later the husband and father died of pneumonia, leaving his family of six children, the oldest only seven, utterly unprotected. Before the days of workmen's compensation laws such a death spelled tragedy.

Now came the test of Bill's character. Was he a real friend to these Poles, or was he just a "jollier"? His wages were very small. His mother and two sisters, dependent upon his support, lived with him in a cheap little mortgaged home near the plant. His load was heavy. But his impulsive and generous young heart went out to the bereaved Polish family, and he determined to help them. With a small death benefit from the "Polish Society" they bought a little home, with a garden. Potatoes, cabbages, and turnips fed the family; berries and onions were too precious to eat and were sold for cash.

The problem was fuel. So every winter Bill filled the woodshed with sound maple wood, split fine and ready for the only heating plant they had, a kitchen range. At Christmas time Bill bought a big turkey, coaxed the young women of his church to roast it for him, put it in a basket with fruit, candy, nuts, and playthings for the children, and took it to the Polish shanty. When the death of the little boy came Bill helped the family through the ordeal. The children grew older and secured light work in the mill. The oldest girl found housework. The mother did washings. So the family kept together.

Less than five years ago Bill revisited the little city and the Polish home. It was Sunday morning. The oldest daughter, for years a waitress in one of Michigan's finest hotels, was home on vacation. Mother was at church. They talked about the boys of the family.

"They are all so good to mother," the daughter said. "None of them ever drank. They didn't even learn to smoke."

Just then the mother came, neatly dressed, wearing her white linen peasant's bonnet. Her face was radiant. She took both of Bill's hands in hers and began to jabber in Polish.

"You'll have to interpret," said Bill, turning to the daughter.

"Oh, mother is saying what she always says when she talks about you. She never could have raised her family, after father's death, but for your help."

In came the youngest boy. He showed Bill his correspondence course in draughtsmanship, and told him of his advancement in his shop and his hopes for the future.

"These," declared Bill, as he blushingly told me this story, "are some of the spiritual returns on that investment." The material ones we have already seen, in the account of the city election, where his precarious business was saved from collapse, and his career from disaster, through the gratitude of His Polish townsmen.

Stimulated to what I trust is a pardonable curiosity by this recital, I desired to go back and find, if possible, the sources of Bill's generosity, and for two years I have been trying to pry from him another chapter of his history. And this in substance, as I recall it, is his story:

"In 1887, when I was eight years old, we moved out into the 'homestead' country in Upper

Michigan. All our possessions, including the family, we carried in one lumber wagon. We moved into a little log cabin in the pine woods. Six years we battled with hunger, disease, and forest fires. Three times we were nearly burned to death. At last we 'proved up,' and sold out for something over $12,000, a fortune in 1893. In two years the saloonkeepers had the money. That year father and mother parted. When father used to get filled with liquor—that 'pure' and 'harmless' kind our wet friends tell us was in use before the Volstead Act—he used to threaten to kill us by shooting us all off 'like rats.' For fear of him we children used to bar our bedroom door with a chair at night. Father went away to the World's Fair, intending never to return. There he spent the last of his money. Meanwhile mother moved our household goods into a freight car bound for M—, her mother's home town. Father and mother never lived together again.

"Before signing the deed when father sold the homestead, mother had insisted on reserving $2,000 for a future home. A Marquette attorney drew the papers, exacting a fee of $1,000. With what money was left, after freight and traveling expenses were paid, we landed in M—, bought a cheap little home, with a mortgage, and kept boarders. I got a job driving a cow to pasture, two miles each way, twice a day, a total of eight miles, for which service, including the milking, I received twenty-five cents a week. I struck for

a raise, and got thirty. The pasture was near a race track. One Sunday afternoon I ran home announcing that I had secured a job as jockey—riding race horses. Grandmother was a Methodist, and there was threatening, pleading, and tears. It happened that I had just passed the eighth grade in school, with a 'condition.' That Sunday afternoon it was decided that sink or swim, I must continue in school.

"Next morning I went up to the high school, asked which course was shortest, and of course selected it. It was the 'commercial.' But, like Philemon's runaway slave, I ran right into what I fled from. My principal was a Christian man, and one day he leaned over my shoulder and whispered: 'Will MacDonald, you're a bright boy, but that idea never seems to have occurred to you. You have a good mind, and if you only would apply yourself, you could become a useful man.'

"This gave me an entirely new outlook. I had always been a 'dummy' in school; nobody expected anything else. I began to believe I was not a 'dummy.' I had come to town reading the life of Jesse James, the frontier bandit, and longing for his liberty. Here was a new idea.

"When I finished my course I was the smallest boy the school had ever graduated, and, because of my size, the professor doubted if he could secure me a position. I have since rubbed my chin on the top of his bald head and asked him if he remembered.

"One night in January, long after, that same

teacher went with me to the 'mourner's bench' in the Methodist church. Then things began to change, and change mightily. A new joy, the first I had ever known, came into my life. I began to grow physically, mentally, morally. Christ had come, care had gone, and nature had a better chance with me.

"The very day that I stood at the altar of that church I faced the 'tithing' challenge, for we had a pastor who believed that nine dollars, with God's blessing, is better than ten dollars without it, and had taught us so. Some of our members, of course, thought that there should be exceptions to this, and my own people were sure that I was among the exempt. However, I could not but feel that God is 'sufficient for these things,' and, contrary to my friends' advice, I plunged into this 'tithing business.' At that time I was earning thirty dollars a month. But things have changed since then. For thirty years I have never had a bill presented twice, seldom once, for we always pay in advance, if possible. The promise, 'My God shall supply all your need,' has proved over and over."

My friend now lives in a beautiful home in a great and thriving American metropolis. His business is very prosperous. He is of the modern, highly efficient, aggressive, inevitably successful type, modest yet self-sufficient. His business is run to pay the high expense of "serving God for a living." His face betrays no more evidence of care than a baby's, yet in his few years he has

trodden the desert path of poverty, groped through the midnight of despair, wallowed in the swamps of religious doubt, and been tossed on angry seas where "neither sun nor stars for many days appeared."

And to-day he is happy, happy in the love of God, in a sense of God's approval, in a consciousness that he is giving his energetic life to further the kingdom of God, and that God in turn is caring for him as personally and more successfully than the wisest parent can care for his child. So I keep probing him for more of his "evidences of Christianity," and some of them are so strange, so seemingly miraculous, so manifestly providential, if one believes in Providence at all, that, if he were not such a sober, sane, matter-of-fact business man, I should wonder if Bill were not back in New Testament days, dreaming of things that happened among the early disciples.

Bill's first capital, the money he put into his perilous insurance venture—now grown to a great and thriving business—was five hundred dollars, given him as a bonus for work cheerfully and voluntarily done outside of office hours, and for which he expected no pay. Another favor, gratefully and gratuitously rendered a friend, costing a great deal of special research and many hours of hard labor, came back equally freighted with blessing. While his wife lay in a hospital bed, recovering from a serious and costly operation whose expense they knew not how to pro-

vide, a large check came from a friend away on the Pacific Coast, who had not the slightest intimation of their need. Here was deliverance!

Immediately they inquired the amount of the hospital bill, and paid it. The amount was identical with the face of the check! (The story of the service rendered Bill's friend is too long and complicated even to outline. It includes the finding in the hands of a mysterious old hermit a deed, involving a large fortune, which had been in the hermit's possession and untraced for over forty years. The entire affair, Bill declares, "cannot be explained unless the hand of God be traced" through it all.)

Of how Bill once risked his financial solvency to repair the windows in the old church, which the official board had neither the pride, the money, nor the faith to undertake; how he paid the bill when due, and how the exact amount he needed came just in time to save him, I need not tell in detail. Nor need I tell how, at another time, when the official board, because of a shortage of $1,300 in current expenses, denied the church's right to pay out money for foreign missions, Bill asked the privilege of raising the entire deficiency, went out among his friends, secured every dollar needed, and came back to find the discouraged church assembled, to show them the bank draft, and to lead them in a glad doxology.

For several years past Bill's "tithing account" (no longer limited to ten per cent) has been

running about $5,000. In this his God-given wife (may her tribe increase!) has loyally co-operated. They have put more than $10,000 into their new church building. They are investing in the up-keep of a colored church in their city, and here, once a month, Bill fills the pulpit as a lay preacher. For years they have supported a native preacher in India, and a girls' day school. They have carried a Chinese and a Korean through the university. They are keeping two Kentucky boys in college. They have invested money in missions throughout the world, and have fast friends in Japan, China, Korea, Ireland, England, India.

One day they sat in a hospital from dawn till dark, waiting for their "Chinese boy" to come from the operating table.

"When I went into that room," he said, "I was not afraid. I remembered my American father and mother were waiting outside for me." And a letter just received from China says, "I never undress at night and see the scar of my operation without thinking of my American father and mother."

Here are compensations beyond all price. If Bill and his wife could trace no fancied material blessing to their faithful stewardship, they still have dividends beyond all estimate. Already have they begun to realize on Jesus' promise, "Great is your reward in heaven." But they include more than this; they are basking in the genial assurance that God is taking care of them,

that he has promised and will provide, and that already he has more than compensated them for every dollar invested in his service. Who knows?

In order to be honest with Bill MacDonald I have had to tell him that I am giving out his story. He doesn't really like it. He wishes I wouldn't, but if I think it will do any good, he will submit. But I haven't been able to tell it "as big as it is," for I have had to omit a good deal, and give him a fictitious name, in order to conceal his identity. But what I have told is enough. I know what my worldly friends, and some of my religious ones, will say: "Bill's success is due entirely to his own ability, energy, shrewdness, generosity, good-nature and optimism. God does, of course, reward men spiritually for their faithfulness, but in material things he is 'no respecter of persons,' and 'makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good.' Let us not involve God in material affairs."

With all my heart! I am willing to leave it entirely to him, and go on encouraging men to serve without thought of anything but his approval. But this question sometimes puzzles me: "Where do the keen and shrewd business men of Bill's type get their exalted notion of God's business acumen, fairness, and fatherliness?"

2. Profit Taking on the Potomac

If I should tell you that every here and there, along the banks of the Potomac River, are little

hidden pockets of gold, you would probably accept my assertion, if at all, with several grains of allowance. You might be too polite to shake your head, but you would probably lack enough self-control to refrain from asking, "How do you know?"

"How do I know?" I know because I have found both the pockets and the gold. Perhaps I ought not to have said "here and there," for I have personally located this yellow treasure in only one place; and perhaps I should mention pockets only in the singular number, for, though I have inserted my eager hand several times and drawn it forth well laden, it has always happened in the case of one and the same pocket. All I wish is that I knew where I could locate a million such pockets, and that each one might prove to be as accessible and as fruitful as the one I have tried.

The most gratifying thing about this pocket of gold is that I never had to hunt for it. It came to me voluntarily, unsought and undreamed of, holding itself wide open to my astonished and exultant gaze, with all the generous abandon of a baby giving away its candy, inviting me to help myself and to come again for more. And this, do not doubt, I proceeded to do.

This pocket, you have already surmised, is no hole in the rock, no hidden cache in the bosky shades of Rock Creek Park. It is worn not far from the heart of a good-natured man who lives in one of the most beautiful and stately cities in

the world. If I were sure you would not abuse my confidence I might be more specific, but perhaps I had better refrain. Nor is the distribution of this bounty the result of carelessness or prodigality on the part of the man who wears the pocket. He guards his treasure with a jealous eye. He has none to waste. He loves this gold which he offers me so unhesitatingly, for it has cost him hard and patient labor, and it stands for the comfort and security of his home and the safety of old age. But he loves it less than something else.

It all happened in this way: Many months ago I received a very interesting letter from a man whom I did not know, whom I probably had never seen, and whose name was totally unfamiliar. He told me that three little books had proved a very great blessing to himself and to others of his acquaintance, namely, Bishop Warne's *A Covenant-Keeping God,* Sayler's *American Tithers,* and a little leaflet entitled "Marilee Interprets Malachi." He said that he felt sure that if a large number of intelligent laymen could read these books, they would find their hearts greatly warmed and their lives enlarged and enriched, and that the results would be apparent in increased offerings for the extension of Christ's kingdom. Then he told me that if I would offer, through our Department of Stewardship, to fifty of the most influential laymen, in some area of the church, free copies of these three books, I might draw upon him for

the money needed to pay for the books and their carriage. The only stipulation was that the donor's name should remain a secret.

Such intelligent and thoroughly considered benevolence is so rare that I closed with it at once. Not presuming to make the selection of conspicuous laymen from my own imperfect knowledge of the church, I wrote the bishop of a near-by Area, extending the offer to him, as soon as the names should be received. The response was immediate, the books were promptly upon their way, and soon the replies from thankful and newly inspired laymen began to come in to the office. Scarcely had the enterprise been launched with this first Area when the offer came to extend the bounty to one or two more, and this has been followed by added offers, until now at least seven Areas have been given the privilege of this generous service.

Nor has the hand of our bounteous Potomac brother yet checked the flow of his benevolence. His heart has gone out toward the needs of our foreign-speaking fellow Christians, and he has made diligent inquiry as to the possibilities of helpfulness in getting stewardship literature, in their native tongue, into the hands of our Spanish and Portuguese friends, offering to contribute of his own resources to the production and distribution of such material.

I have wondered a great deal about this anonymous friend. "Surely," I said to myself, "here is a man who has prospered in all his ways. The

things he has touched have 'turned to gold.' Perhaps the war enriched him. Perhaps he inherits vast treasure from some great family. In any event he is an opulent capitalist, apparently well able to pour out his bounty in well-doing. Doubtless he dines in state, lives in luxury, and occupies some exalted office in one of our great churches. If he is not one of the 'princely laymen' of whom we hear so much, where should we look for one? What manner of man is this, that he should do so unexampled a thing, and arouse the curiosity and merit the gratitude of a whole church?"

I sought him out. By an innocent device I obtained an interview. My bounteous benefactor, my Croesus-like capitalist, I found to be a quiet, modest, humble little man, working loyally at his yearly task, earning his daily bread, building up the levees against the flood of old age, laying aside his weekly portion for Kingdom-building, though he has already passed the age at which men are fain to seek retirement. For years he has been a trusted clerk in one of the departments of the federal government. From this modest source he derives his income.

Heredity, while apparently contributing nothing to his material resources, has made him rich, for he looks back with gratitude to the faithful instructions of a devout Christian mother and to grandparents of like loyalty. Though not now an office-bearer in the church he is an active member of one of our oldest congregations. Yet

even here his activities are of a modest sort. He cannot "speak in meeting," as his emotions flood his brimming heart and choke the grateful utterances which rise to his lips.

By degrees I drew from him a fragmentary record of his benefactions. They have not been large, but they have been steady, and faithful, and wisely placed, and even in magnitude they would put to shame the very best giving of many a prosperous church official whose name is spread broadcast throughout the land. It has been only within the last few years that this good man has been able to contribute much to causes outside the support of his own local church. But these years have been filled with well-doing. For five years he contributed ten dollars every month to the help of needy students in one of our Southern colleges, and this program has been duplicated for our work in Jubbulpore, India. His wife, who is in complete accord with him in his stewardship benevolence, is now maintaining a thirty-dollar scholarship in Seoul, Korea, and one of twenty dollars in Mexico City. I got a glimpse of his long list of other gifts, to his own church and to a multitude of causes, but to name them would be to tell his secret to the world.

"Has he received any material compensation for his stewardship?" I did not hear of any. I asked him what rewards had come to him in recognition of all his giving. "Spiritual compensations only," he replied. "It has been a

pleasure to do it all. Sometimes it has been hard to get and spare the money, but the joy has all been mine."

In these prosperous days vast sums are yearly flowing into our national treasury, the taxes from our opulent American incomes lifting the tide higher month by month, almost to the embarrassment of our federal statesmen. Never, in all the history of our land, have such bounteous material blessings left their high-water mark on the gauges of our national capital. Yet among all the treasures that have passed through the public and private channels of our stately city on the Potomac, I doubt if any have brought a richer blessing or a more abiding reward than the treasures which have accumulated in the pocket of my modest friend.

3. A Widow's Winnings

There was held the other day, in a little country church in central Ohio, the funeral of a very exceptional woman. Although few of the people who will read this story ever so much as heard of her existence, she lived a truly remarkable life, and, because of her good deeds and high principles, unconsciously spread her name abroad throughout the English-speaking world.

This woman was the widow of a humble Methodist minister, a member of the New Hampshire Conference, who died many years ago. This minister was a person of equally remarkable and sterling character with his wife, though differing

to a high degree in temperament. He was by nature a student. He reveled in great and abstruse themes, theological, doctrinal, philosophical, and though, like most of his brethren in the ministry, he lived in uncertain and itinerant poverty, he was always in possession of an ample store of books, great books, deep books, books that connected him with the generations of history and the thoughts of the world's great men—books new, second-hand, bought, begged, or borrowed. In his parsonage home the flour-bin might be low, the pork-barrel empty, the wardrobe as bare of costly raiment as Mother Hubbard's cupboard of edibles, but the living-room table was covered with papers and magazines and the book-shelves laden with books.

Much of this exceptional character, so alert to the larger meaning of life, so devoted to his high calling, so loyal to the brotherhood, and so modest and self-effacing, one is intensely curious to know. But it is the more striking experiences of his remarkable widow that this story would tell, for among these experiences has been discovered a lesson most adaptable to the needs of the Christian Church at this present hour.

In the World Service office of our church there was employed until very recently, by one or two of our benevolent boards and for some particularly important work, a very talented and interesting young man who, for some cause unknown to me but by reason of his genial and friendly spirit, had come to be known familiarly to us all

as "Pat." As he was uncommonly quiet and undemonstrative, and, though friendly, did not invite familiarity, I had never supposed that he was particularly interested in my work for stewardship or had really given any definite thought to the subject. What was my surprise, therefore, some months ago, as we happened to be working alone in the office, after the closing hour, to have him say to me: "I am very much interested in Christian stewardship and in the work of your department; I have had some stewardship experiences of a quite intimate sort."

Concealing my surprise I said: "I am very glad to know that. Tell me of your experiences."

"One bleak December day in 1889," said Pat, "we laid my father to rest in a little cemetery in central Ohio. Mother was left a widow with five little children. The oldest, Frank, was sixteen, I was three, and between us were two more boys and a little girl. The relatives gathered about, after the funeral, and wondered what poor 'Aunt Nan' was going to do now to keep her little brood together and keep them supplied with food and clothing. 'Why, I'm going to live on the farm,' she said, 'and bring up my children as a Christian family.'" It appears that the father had somehow acquired a little farm, but unstocked and without money.

The relatives protested, but the mother stood firm, and three or four days after the funeral the little party sorrowfully took the train for the Ohio farm.

The neighbors came, with sympathy and condolences, and said to the mother: "Now let us help you. Frank's a husky boy; we'll take him and hire him out for sixteen or twenty dollars a month and his board, and you take care of the other children, the best you can. But don't try to run the farm."

"No," said the mother again. "I must keep my children together, bring them up right, and educate them, and this winter Frank must go to college."

"Go to college!" Was the woman crazy?

So the neighbors went away, saying among themselves: "Of course Mrs. Mac is a perfectly good Christian, but most unpractical. Anybody can see that."

The struggle began. In the winter term Frank went away to Ohio Wesleyan University. His mother helped him all she could, and he did all he could to help himself. And then came the financial crisis of 1893. Times were hard. There was little money to be had. The mother was obliged more than once to borrow money of her neighbors, and at that time the interest rate was eight per cent, and often ten and twelve per cent.

"One day," continued Pat, "I went to carry the interest money to a good Methodist neighbor from whom mother had borrowed. When I got to his house I discovered that he had figured compound interest instead of simple interest and that I lacked fourteen cents of enough to pay in full. So back home I went, through the cold,

barefooted, to get the fourteen cents, before I could get the interest receipted. Talk about 'child labor,' exclaimed Pat. "I know all about it. I lived it when I was seven and eight years old!"

The struggle went on. By and by another son, Fred, was sent to college, and at last Pat himself. Three of these boys went to Ohio Wesleyan and graduated, and then to Boston University and graduated. It was there, I think, I first met Frank. Three sons became Methodist ministers, one a Christian business man, and the daughter a minister's wife. You see, the whole family aimed high.

"That's a remarkable experience," I said. "But what's all this got to do with stewardship? Of course your mother was actually practicing the very highest form of stewardship, but we were talking of a particular phase of it."

"Oh," said Pat, "of course mother always paid her tenth. And it wasn't any skimped tenth either. It was a tenth of her gross receipts. You are teaching the church that the tithe is a tenth of the net income, and that's right; but mother took the first tenth out of all she raised—eggs, butter, chickens, grain, apples, potatoes—without figuring the cost of production, and laid it up for the Lord—no lame ducks or dead calves for the Lord's portion. He always got the best.

"You know," Pat continued, with the glimmer of a reminiscent smile, "whenever I think of the tithe I can smell coffee. Mother used to put her

tithe money in an old coffeepot, away up on the high shelf, and our church and Sunday-school money always smelt like coffee.

"Well, by and by, in that prosperous farming community, they had to build a new church and here again mother practiced her ten-per-cent habit—she furnished a tenth of the whole cost of that church. But it was a good investment. For out of that little country church have come *seventeen Methodist ministers,* including mother's three, and even the Methodist brother who collected the fourteen cents compound interest at last got grace enough to send his own sons to college to prepare for Christian service, and himself became at length a very devoted servant of the church."

Right here I know some "level-headed," "practical," "feet-on-the-ground" brother will object, "All this was hardly reasonable, fit only for old-fashioned Christians, in a crude and bucolic period of history. This mother was doubtless a good, humble, simple-minded country woman, and her innocent sons probably grew up to be plodding, unprogressive, obscure Methodist preachers. What a pity!"

Not so fast, my friend.

It is no mark of genius to doubt or to sneer, nor are all humble, trustful disciples simpletons. This woman lived right up to our own illustrious day, and kept fully abreast with this progressive age. Her practical wisdom was so abundant that she became the oracle of her community, the

Solomon to whom the neighbors came with their disputes and troubles, an unofficial judge, a Deborah in this present-day Israel. She became, in a sense not always implied in the expression, the "leading member" of her church. She kept up with the times and with her college sons. In 1916 she was elected, and served, as a member of the Methodist General Conference, an honor not despised by the most conspicuous ministers and laymen of our church.

Her name is Nancy J. McConnell, and this youngest son is the Rev. Charles M. McConnell, now professor in Boston University; the second son is the Rev. Frederick W. McConnell, an honored member of one of our largest Conferences, superintendent of a home-mission project among the coal miners of Somerset County, Pennsylvania, one of the most difficult fields in Methodism, and "a job," Pat declares, "more fundamental than any of the rest of us are doing;" while the eldest son is Bishop Francis J. McConnell, whose character and abilities would adorn the record of the church in any century, and whose career renders lustrous the healthy, sacrificial and full-orbed stewardship of a noble mother. In ten thousand Christian homes to-day such stewardship is thriving and bearing fruit, and it is such stewardship of time, talent, money, faith, motherhood, citizenship, churchmanship, which will ultimately save the world.

Recently this faithful mother was stricken with paralysis, and ten days before her death

came another stroke so severe that she was almost completely paralyzed. Her mind was perfectly clear, so that she could understand all that was said to her, but it was impossible for her to utter a word, or in any way to communicate her thoughts or desires to those about her. When her second son, Fred, reached her bedside he promptly worked out a system of signals: If mother could not talk, she could at least move her hand in reply to their questions. Moving her hand up and down would mean "Yes"; moving it back and forth would mean "No."

Two days before her death she began to indicate that she wished to say something. What could it be? No one seemed able to understand. "Did she desire something to eat?" No. "To drink?" No. At last the daughter questioned:

"Mother, have you paid your quarterly subscription to the church?"

"Yes," answered the feeble, wasted hand.

"Is it something about World Service?"

"Yes," replied the fluttering fingers.

"Do you wish us to pay it for you?"

"No."

"Well, have you already paid it?"

"Yes."

"What in the world can it be—Do you want to pay up for another year, for 1928?"

"Yes!" triumphantly declared the weary fingers—and this daughter of faith sank back in peace upon her pillow.

This was her last serious message to her chil-

dren, her last message to the world in which she had lived. From the uttermost depths of a soul whose every energy had been expended in promoting the salvation of the world and the triumph of Christ, it seemed to say: "Carry on! Do not despair! The morning cometh! In due season we shall reap . . . for all things are possible with God." Her habit of stewardship having become part and parcel of her character, she carried it with her into the great unknown.

CHAPTER II

RADIANT PERSONALITIES

1. The Mother Who Never Forgot

They were huddled between two low-backed seats of an old-fashioned "day coach," on a Southern railroad. There were five in the party, not counting daddy, who sat by himself, in a seat across the aisle, silently gazing into vacancy. They were starting on a long journey. It was "eight hundred miles!" the matronly big sister Mattie, aged eleven, explained, and it would take three days, by rail, to cover the almost interminable distance. For in those days railroad lines had only begun to consolidate, through trains were rare, connections uncertain and inconvenient, stations far apart, and the long ride in the day coach must somewhere be broken by an overnight stop in some inexpensive hotel along the route.

The luxury of a Pullman had not for a moment been considered. Not because this little family were poor, though that was undoubtedly true, but for the good and sufficient reason that nobody had even thought of it. Pullman cars were scarce in those years that followed so closely on the heels of the Civil War, and proud was the train which could boast the distinction of including one. "Sleeping cars" were for the

rich, or for those who were brazen enough not to fear the tongue of sarcasm. It is doubtful if either daddy or mother had ever seen the inside of one, though once or twice they had gazed in longing wonder as a strange long car had passed, bearing on its shining side the painted announcement, "Pullman Palace Sleeping Car."

And so, except for the children, this journey was not anticipated as a pleasure trip. It was a task to perform, a duty to be done, a cross which must be borne. Seven months ago, when the outward journey was undertaken, the children numbered three; now they were four, a wee sister having joined the circle in the meantime. Thus, with some of the dread, and the fear, and the pain, and the foreboding which Mary must have felt as she journeyed to Bethlehem, had this little mother taken her way to the Southland; and with much of Mary's weary watchfulness and anxious solicitude on the flight into Egypt had this modern mother journeyed North again. And there were other cares; not only the tiny baby to watch, and nurse, and hold in weary arms through the long hours; not only the wonder and care about the strange new home and neighborhood, to which they were coming on their return, but the two vigorous restless boys, Wesley, aged five, and Wilberforce, just turned three, who must be kept within bounds, kept cheerful, and peaceable, and clean, and healthy, for three long days and nights, within the confines of a dusty day coach.

But they were happy, this little family, for they were going home! Back to the beautiful Peninsular State, the land of many lakes, where life had begun with them. This adventurous journey had been a failure, not so much in material things, for friendly neighbors and rolling lands and lusty corn fields had promised prosperous days, but years of disaster long since had devastated and impoverished the land to which they went, schools, except in the most populous centers, were inadequate, and churches were small and scattered. One little country Sunday school whose entire resources had been exhausted in committing to memory the first chapter of Mark, had furnished the sole program of spiritual nurture for the year.

To this father and mother life, apart from the little white church, the little red schoolhouse, the township library, and the weekly Bible school and prayer meeting, could scarcely be conceived, much less endured, and so, before the tent stakes of their adventurous sojourn had been fairly driven, homesickness for their accustomed "privileges," and ambition for the future and the character of "the children," had pulled the stakes, struck the tent, and started the little flock on their homeward way.

Happy mother! Her face bore no trace of care, sorrow, fretfulness, anxiety. What reptiles of worry and fear gnawed at her heart I do not know, but she never forgot to be cheerful. She must be atmosphere, environment, for her chil-

dren. Hers it was to be their monitor, counselor, playfellow, companion, competitor, stimulant, inspiration. If the tempest howled within her soul, her brow was calm. If her nerves quivered with inward anguish, her hands and voice were steady. She was "captain of her soul."

"It's lunch time," she announced. "Now we'll all have a nice picnic dinner." She unpacked the basket of cold chicken, pickles, homemade cookies, and other goodies. The little boys pressed closer. Mattie cautiously peered into the basket, Father came across the aisle; the baby slept; the noonday sun shone in through the car windows, and all was well. Did father "ask the blessing," right there in the car? Memory fails to testify, which means that he probably did, for if he had forgotten, mother would have gently taken him to task, all of which would have provided an unforgettable incident.

"Now, for my part," declared mother, after all had been served, digging a knifeful of butter from the big tin cup in which it had been packed, "for once I'm going to have a piece of bread spread just as thick with butter as I want it!" With this she proceeded to indulge herself in a luxury whose magnitude the lapse of time has never succeeded in erasing from memory's tablet. At evening time, as the little group changed cars and embarked upon another train, when the oil lamps had been lit, and the supper lunch unpacked, father came in from the platform with a strange, dark, fragrant, crescent-shaped object

which he said was a bologna sausage. The children ate and were happy. This sausage and the thick butter constituted the luxuries of this journey, and the "train butcher," with his basket of candy and oranges, beat it back and forth unpatronized.

In such surroundings, normally expressed in the simple environment of a quiet farm and country life, did this father and mother rear and discipline their brood. Comforts were but moderate; of luxuries there were none. Books were few and their variety was restricted. Music, painting, travel, architecture, equipage, were but vague imaginings dependent for their very existence upon the fleeting dreams awakened by *The Ladies Repository, The Classmate, The Youth's Companion, The Sunday Magazine,* or some other periodical, or some story borrowed from neighbor, friend or library. But everything essential was there. Truth, honor, purity, reverence, fairness, loyalty, diligence, patience, perseverance, the love of knowledge, the fear of sin, justice for men, worship for God—all that the richest and noblest and most learned can ever have, though they dwell in palaces and command uncounted treasure.

Here was a mother who never forgot. Many little ones to care for, many tasks to perform, little help in her labors, little opportunity for pleasure, little inspiration to hope for riches further on, yet she trudged ahead with cheerful optimism, and an eye and a heart for every duty.

She never forgot that she was a Christian disciple. Normally she had a real taste for pleasure, gayety, and luxury. She loved beauty. She loved life. She loved good clothes, though living without them. In her girlhood it had been a hard wrench to renounce "the vain pomp and glory of the world," and to tear herself from the gayeties which normally appeal to youth but which her spiritual advisers frowned upon. She was the ring-leader of the social set in the rustic community where her youth was spent, and when, in the "protracted meeting" where after a long, long struggle, she made her decision for Christ, she "went forward to the mourners' bench," a whole galaxy of young women followed in her train. The "worldly life" once renounced was abandoned forever. Not one regretful look did she cast behind. Her choice was deliberate and irrevocable, and she lived with the one purpose, to "adorn her profession with a well-ordered life," and to "make her calling and election sure."

She never forgot her devotional duties. Old-fashioned she would have seemed to some of us, but vacillating and unreliable never. Secret prayer, Bible reading, Sunday-morning service, evening service, Sunday school, midweek prayer service, were as much a part of her program of life as the daily round of housework. It would have been just as easy to omit breakfast as to omit the "family prayers," which invariably followed and at which the father, who had pro-

fessed his faith at the same "protracted meeting," officiated as high priest of the household, supporting and encouraging his companion in every plan and purpose of service and devotion.

Sometimes the business of the big farm was very pressing. The heat of a July sun pouring forth its fervors in the early hours of the morning, the "hired man" and the crowd of harvest hands or the gang of threshers ready for the day's exertions, the horses champing at the bits and eager for the reaper, all seemed to say: "Time is money, the hours are golden, the overripe wheat is shelling out upon the fields, why let it waste, why not omit the family prayers and hasten to the task? There will be time for religion when the crops are in." No matter; the men could wait, the wheat could wait, there was always time to acknowledge the Giver of the harvest; family prayers proceeded. Were the harvest losses great? I think not. And the influence upon the men, and upon the neighborhood, was profound.

Sometimes this loyalty to principle seems almost suicidal. It is Sunday noon, the hay is cut, and cured, and in the cock, ready to be hauled to barn or stack. A shower would seriously injure and might ruin it. And the shower is coming, already black clouds cover the western sky. Why not get out the teams, and the men, and save the crop? Or, the wheat is in the field, overripe and ready for the reaper, or in the shock and waiting to be gathered safely

in. Why risk its destruction? Or, the maple trees in the "sugar bush" are pouring out their treasures of sap all through the warm spring Sunday, and the buckets are full and running over. God gave this riches, why let it run to waste? Why not get out and gather the sap and boil it down into golden syrup? The answer in each case is the same: "God gave, and he can give again, or withhold. This is his day, he holds all eternity in his hands, and he has ample time to give us space to rest and worship. The sap and the hay and the wheat can wait till tomorrow, but our opportunities to nurture character are fleeting."

This mother never forgot that other people have as good a right to the gospel message as we who have already received it. She had an eagle eye for "souls." She wanted "all men to be saved." Her prayer list included not only her own loved ones and her friends, but some of the most unlovely and unpromising characters in the neighborhood. She had a liking for hard cases. The toughest tough in town, had he happened upon her in her hour of devotion, would no doubt have heard his own name breathed into the pitying ear of the All-Father.

Neither did she forget the importance of bearing her personal testimony and making her own plea, in the business of winning men to God. It might be an itinerant tin peddler, or the periodical lightning-rod agent, or the new schoolmaster, for whose spiritual welfare she was con-

cerned, there was no shrinking or shirking. If the conversation did not automatically drift in the right direction, she made it drift, until it came around to where she could naturally and modestly ask, "Are you, too, a professor?" She did not mean a college professor; it is doubtful if, in those earlier days, she had ever seen a college professor, or even knew the name of one. She meant to ask, "Have you personally accepted Christ and professed your faith in him?" And it is very doubtful if she was ever repulsed. On the contrary, her sincerity, modesty, and unquestioned interest and devotion commended her to all who knew her, and made her a winner of men and women, young and old, to the faith she loved.

In middle life her opportunities broadened. The family home was established in a beautiful college town, where she came to know life in its larger aspects, and formed contacts with the wise and great. Her house became the home and rendezvous of several "generations" of college students, and each young man in time became to her a son, a definite charge upon the stewardship of her time, her counsels, her affections and her prayers. College boys are not, as a class, eagerly solicitous for religious attention, spiritual admonition, or motherly rebukes and warnings, and doubtless the counsels she proffered were sometimes irksome to these youth, but the boys came to recognize in this mother a sympathetic friend, and a participant in all their ambitions,

problems, perplexities and joys, and a guide to the treasures of the spiritual life. It is more than possible that I have unduly idealized a character which possessed its full share of faults, follies, superstitions and sins, but from ocean to ocean I have met a multitude of men, now grown from college youth to sober maturity, who still rise up to "call her blessed," and to reverence her name and memory. For, to this very hour, she "being dead yet speaketh."

2. A Wayside Shrine

As she ran out of the little cottage, down the gentle slope of the grassy knoll and into the sandy ruts of the country road that led to the little red schoolhouse, carrying her lunch basket in her hand, and followed by her fleet-footed brother, she was indeed a bonnie lassie. Full of life and light and joy, she seemed the perfect image of irresponsible girlhood and rural innocence. Her long black curls were flung to the sportive morning breeze, and her feet danced along the unfrequented highway as happily as though she were living in a densely peopled fairyland. She loved life. She loved it

> "As the wild bee loves
> The blossoms sweet, on which he roves
> Around the fields and blooming groves."

Could you have been favored with a look into her snapping black eyes, you would have en-

countered a frank and fearless glance of mingled modesty and mischief, the modesty predominant. It was a happy home from which she had just emerged, and the little house was white and trim and inviting, sheltered by the great spreading arms of the overarching maples, and presiding as mistress of the well-tilled farm to which it appertained. And it was a happy life the maiden led, surrounded and cherished by parents and dear ones.

But that was in the long ago. To-day you would look again, and yet again, before you would ever recognize this home or its environment. The little knoll of course remains, the spreading trees are there, but old and mossy, the grassy carpet is tall and straggling, the little cottage, though still well kept and marked with evidences of affectionate care, has sunken lower in its earthly mold, and is weathered and scarred with the buffetings of the years. And, strangest of all, the narrow, sandy, rutted, unfrequented country road, which in those past days wound out of the deep pine forest yonder, and through the stumpy clearing, and wandered aimlessly along toward the schoolhouse, is now a broad, smooth, straight, level motor highway, leading from, to, and through the great cities of the commonwealth and carrying daily great trains of vehicles, rushing by with the swiftness of the wind, on business and pleasure bent.

Change too has chiseled deep its mark on all that pertains to the life of the little cottage. Yet

not all is changed. That which is true and deathless still abides. Gone is the youth of the bonnie lassie. Gone are the parents, and friends, and happy schoolmates. Gone is the raven gloss of the ringleted hair, and in its place have come the somber gray threads of middle age. Gone the gleeful laughter, the aimless hours, the romantic dreams of by-gone days. But all the best remains, with doubled value. Character abides and increases. The little girl who played about the grassy yard is now the soul and center of the home. From sunrise to afternoon of life she has lived and hoped and toiled in this uneventful spot. And to her innocence and charm and modesty have been added rich accessions of experience, and faith, and patience, and obedience, and forgiveness, and intercession, and sanctification of deed and purpose.

Her life has been no life of pleasure. The thrills and gayeties and fashions of the years have passed her by, as unconscious of her presence as the heedless motorists who flit along the highway. Nor has it been a life of ease. While her children were yet in their babyhood her husband was taken from her, and she was left to bear alone the burden of their upbringing, with the added burden of a bitter hand-to-hand fight with adversity. Later, until their death, came the care of her aged parents. And always, from the dawn of her life, the burden and care and pity of a helpless invalid brother.

But she has not walked alone. Beside her, on

the solitary and sometimes desolate pathway, has ever been a Presence. In the darkest hour she has had for her guidance the Light of the world. When the load has pressed her to the earth suddenly she has felt beneath her the Everlasting Arms. When the care of fatherless children, and of children's children, surpassed her utmost resources, she had the help of Him who is the Father of the fatherless and the Husband of the widow. When poverty stared her in the face, a Voice said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." For in the days of her youth she sought the friendship of her Saviour, and gave her life's purposes and every thought and plan "into captivity to the obedience of Christ." And he has never forgotten her. And along the lonely, stony road she has gone singing, and trusting, and living courageously, optimistically, helpfully. Her eye is older, but not dim; her face is older, but not carved with bitterness and doubt and complaining; her step is slower, but firm, determined and erect. She has never thought about it, probably, but she also is "captain of her soul." She makes no claim to meritorious service, but "They also serve who only stand and wait."

I remember well the day she made her decision for the better life. It seemed but a normal transition for this modest, innocent and exemplary young woman to forsake the world and follow Christ, for there was so little to change. But the step was not an easy one, even for her,

and required a vast deal of courage, preparation, and determination. For her friends and schoolmates were watching, some curious, some ready to deride, some to discourage. And in the best of us lurks the longing to know a little more of the pleasures and gayeties and adventures of life before we put them all aside—maybe out in the great unexplored world there is something we shall miss. In all of us too there lurks a little of "the pride of life," a joy in the ornate and the beautiful, and we wonder if this too must go when we choose "the better part."

And this maiden loved the beautiful. I well recall how proud and brave she looked, at a party where we met, clad in a fine new dress of that enchanting and dignified shade our mothers called "wine-colored." Besides, in those days such as sought the narrow way were expected bravely to rise up before their fellow men and declare their purpose in no uncertain terms. For many a timid young soul this was harder than all the rest. But even from this dreadful test this gentle maiden did not shrink, and to this day she lives loyally in that realm of lofty ideals to which this fidelity to the stewardship of her own destiny introduced her.

Not many months ago I knocked at the door of the little cottage. Would I find anyone within? Would there be recognition after all these years? What changes may time have wrought? There were footsteps within, and this widow opened the door.

"Come right in," she said, with a smile of recognition and a cheerful welcome. "I got your new book from the post box only a day or two ago, and I sat right down to read it. I read several chapters, as many as I could, before I laid it down, and I am going to read it all."

"Now, I don't want you to feel compelled to read it all," I replied, "just because we are old friends. It may prove really quite dull and uninteresting. It's no modern novel, I assure you."

"But we need something besides novels," she said. "Do you know, since I began reading about stewardship I have decided to practice it. I have begun to tithe my income. I never thought much about it before, but I want to do it."

There swept before my mind the record of her struggles, her sacrifices, her sorrows and her pitifully small material resources, and I said to myself: "Am I guilty of suggesting, for widows and orphans and the hard-pressed of society, burdens 'too grievous to be borne'—something that will dull their joy, and retard their step, and make their Christian life a stumbling-block?"

Whether or not she divined my perplexity I cannot tell, but she hastened quickly to add: "Yes, I am sure it is the right way, and I am already finding great joy and blessing in it. And I am thinking too," she continued, "that I must give some new and systematic study to the Word of God, and I am trying to plan wisely for that."

And over her face swept that brighter light

than ever shines on sea or land, that smile of faith and inward peace which irons out the jagged lines of suffering and care, and her eyes glowed with a gladness I have never beheld in the eyes of all the sleek and fashion-fettered women I have known, and my heart said within itself: "Surely such unconscious and unboasting stewardship is numbering up a multitude of transfigured lives for the glorious company of the Eternal King."

3. One Mid-Victorian Party

The young men and women of to-day will be more than astonished to be told that there were any parties at all in that far-removed and mythical "Mid-Victorian Era." Perhaps we have not been sufficiently candid with the youth of the present hour on the subject of the enjoyments of which we partook in those years when we were young.

Yes, there were parties in those days, and very delightful ones too. Moreover, the party of which I am about to write was a genuine "petting party"; indeed, if I were compelled to go the limit, and confess the entire truth, I should have to admit that it even partook of the nature of a "necking party." Perhaps I ought to apologize at once for my shamelessness in introducing the matter at all, or even intimating the possibility of such a thing, but I am hoping that the sequel will show that in this case "the end justifies the means," and that thus, wholly "in the

interests of truth," I may be pardoned for indulging in this item of "realism."

One of the two chief conspirators in this little comedy was a bashful farmer boy, not yet out of his teens. It was late on a Sunday afternoon, a time unusually propitious, in country places, for the staging of such dramas. The summer was in the lush and lusty vigor of its expiring days, the wheat harvest was over, and the corn was standing high overhead, ripe, rustling in the early September breeze, and waiting for the sickle. The yellow stubble in the field beyond the little swamp, the leaves of the sweet sumac tinged with red, and the drowsy hum of the big blue flies announced that summer was ready to merge her charms in the gorgeous glory of the autumn.

Sunday afternoon! In summer! In the country! In those far-gone days before the aeroplane, before the motor car, before the trolley car, when honest people, wearied with the labors of a busy week, arrayed in their clean Sunday clothes, could saunter out into the fields and woods, stretch their tired limbs, breathe the pure fresh air, watch the lazy cattle pasturing on the hillsides, peer into the cool depths of the crystal spring, wade through the meadow grass, gaze through the leaves of the maples into the clear blue sky, and lift up their hearts in thankfulness to the good God above for all his bounties! When the Bethlehem angels sang, "Peace on earth," may they not have included in their prophecy scenes like this?

The country boy in question presented a slight variation from the "common run." He was not very wise, nor very foolish. He was not a bad boy, neither was he a finished saint. He was just a little "different." Not overfond of work, nor excessively lazy; a good, useful farm hand, faithful to his duties, but with his head in the clouds and walking in a dream. He took no particular interest in hunting, dancing, courting, or going out nights with the other young men; neither did he find any surpassing pleasure in studying his Sunday-school lessons or listening to sermons. He had but recently emerged from a period of hating hymns, because they were "silly," and of despising preachers because they wore shiny black trousers. Of recent months, however, he had taken an unusual interest in church affairs, and had sought with unaccustomed earnestness to find for himself the meaning and power of the religious life. But his passion was to know. He loved books—all sorts of books.

His yearning for books was as powerful and as varied as the reputed appetite of the ostrich for miscellaneous edibles. Whatever came his way was grist for his insatiable mill. The organ of his intellectual activities was gizzard rather than brain. Sailor stories, war stories, adventures, poems, books of travel, books on geology, physics, astronomy, theology—whatever fell into the hopper was welcomed with avidity and without prejudice or partiality. Milton's *Paradise*

Lost was gnawed to the bone. Likewise the *Works of Flavius Josephus*. Whatever was missed was omitted because it could not be had. This summer it had been a Latin grammar!—all by himself, and nobody for miles around, except the family doctor, who knew a word of Latin. The previous summer he had "studied French"—under like conditions.

All this in preparation for college! For he must go to college. This was a vision that had persisted for years. There was no alternative—college was as inevitable as the Judgment. Just what college was, he did not know. He had never seen one, and none of the neighbors could tell him. He was the first native son, in fact, who had ever conceived the idea. But in college they reveled in books, they learned, they discovered truth, they amassed great treasuries of facts, they accumulated mountains of knowledge. Therefore it was ordained that he should go. For years there had been no money to pay the expenses, but now for fifteen months he had been saving up his meager earnings, and at last he could go.

Bright and early to-morrow, Monday morning, he is to start for college. And that brings us back to this Sunday afternoon. Dinner is over—chicken dinner, of course, with all the bounties of a farmer's table. Father is nodding in his chair, mother is reading her *Sunday School Journal* and the younger children *The Classmate* and *Advocate*. The lad puts on his hat,

passes out the front gate, and starts off down the road. Half a mile away, over three hills and beyond the little swamp, lives his married sister, with the jolly big brother-in-law and the baby boy.

And what a sister! She was never like other sisters—she was just better. She didn't chew gum, she didn't toss her head, she didn't hate boys, she didn't say mean sarcastic things; she was just a "regular chum," and listened when you talked, and took an interest. Of course she was six years older, and that adds dignity and sobriety and begets a sort of reverence. But she was never "bossy," she was always companionable. Perhaps the natural bond of sympathy between the lad and this sister was just a little stronger than the ordinary. She had not only shown an interest in the boy's affairs, she had paid him the high compliment of confiding her own affairs to him, and of asking his counsel and confidence. Years ago, before she had told "another living soul," late at night, after the younger children had gone to sleep, she had imparted to him the secret of her engagement. And who would not react manfully and affectionately to such a trust as that? And now she has "specially invited" him to come over to her house for a little while with her on this last Sunday before he, perhaps finally, severs the home ties.

"So you're starting for college to-morrow! Well, I'm so glad. I just know you'll have a good

time, and prove yourself a good student, and bring honor to yourself and all of us, and fit yourself better to help your fellowmen and serve the God we love." And how that lad wishes, to this day, that he could remember all the things they talked about that afternoon, and the wise counsel she gave, and the fine, noble, exalted themes she discussed with him, and the manly purposes she inspired and confirmed within his breast. Let it suffice that the influences of that holy Sabbath hour have never departed from him, and have sustained and molded his life in all the years that have followed.

Then she said: "Now, let's take it all to God and talk it over with him; let's 'go and tell Jesus.'" She led him through the open door into her humble little bedroom, made him kneel down beside her at the bedside, patted him on the shoulder, put her arm around his neck, and said, "Let us pray." And she prayed, and he prayed; and they told the good Lord the little that they knew about it all, and the more that they surmised about it, and poured out before him their longings, and yearnings, and praises, and left it to his almightiness and love. Just what they said only the recording angel now knows, nor does it matter, for they laid before God all their need, uttered or unexpressed, and he answered their prayer—of that they are sure. Thus did this faithful girl fulfill the stewardship of sisterhood.

"Do you think that 'petting parties' are

wrong?" asked a young friend of mine the other day. "Many of them, doubtless," I replied, "but not the one of which I am thinking."

4. A Professor of the Old School

I was soaring among the Delectable Mountains, I was in the seventh heaven; though my ecstasy was tempered with that tremulous and uncertain awe that I am sure will grip my soul if I ever find myself transported to that celestial region. I had accidentally overtaken the Great Professor in the Public Garden. He had benignantly smiled upon me in recognition and adjusted his pace to mine, and we were now walking through the Common, on our way to his mysterious and awful lecture room in old Jacob Sleeper Hall. This sort of chance meeting had never happened before, and never happened again. I had scarcely ever seen the Professor except in his proper habitat, the lecture room, and found it difficult to conceive of one so learned and profound in any such ordinary place as a city street or a trolley car. He came and went each day, whence and whither I knew not, beamed for an hour upon our benighted minds, gave us glimpses of unfathomable truth, and disappeared in mystery. He lived, they said, in Longwood. Honored suburb!

There was no reason why I should be afraid of the Professor, for he was the very soul of kindness, simplicity, and democracy. Any thought of pride, or exclusiveness, or selfishness,

in connection with his character, would have been impossible. That he would have been received with open arms, by any university in the land, was known to all; and that he had refused the call of a then much larger and older university than ours, at a vast increase in salary, was taken as an inevitable and self-revealing truth—the Professor could have done nothing else and still maintain his identity. As a matter of fact, I suppose I was not really afraid of him. Indeed, I suspect that my reverence for professors in general was not equal to their deservings. But this Professor was of a higher order of being; he belonged in a different sphere, his thoughts were not as our thoughts, neither were our ways his ways. He knew so much! His intellectual sight apparently found everything transparent. The most hidden secrets of the universe seemed to us but the playthings of truth in his hands. To his clarified thinking the profundities of the universe were, as he expressed it, "sun clear."

In our brief talk that morning I do not think we got very far—there seemed to be so little in common. I am sure that he tried to walk on my level, and I know that I tried, diffidently, to reach up to where he lived. Already saturated with his metaphysical idealism, I wondered how the common objects of life really looked to him; I swept my hand out toward the flowers and statuary of the garden, and ventured to suppose "that there is, after all, something substantial and real about all these things."

"All this," he replied, with emphatic reverence, "is just as real and substantial as anything could possibly be."

Whether he meant what I thought doesn't matter; we had struck bottom.

Just as we reached Park Street, mounted the low granite steps which in those days led up from the Common to the street, and were passing between the old iron posts of the stile, a little accident occurred which laid bare for me the soul of The Professor as I had never seen it, should never see it again, and as probably few of his worshiping students ever had occasion to see it. The top button in my best light overcoat —the only one I had, and evidently none too sound—caught in a crack in one of the iron posts, and, before I could stop, had torn a savage triangular hole in the coat. To me it spelt disaster, but in this presence I could not afford to give it thought, and started on with a genuine feeling of indifference.

Not so the Professor. He stopped, looked at the rent, examined the post, wondered how it could have happened so, wondered what I could do to repair the loss, and evinced so sincere and serious a concern for my economic welfare that I seemed in a moment to be given the clairvoyance to see away deep down through the wisdom, the learning, the accumulated experience of a great philosopher, and into the very childlike innocent depths of a matchless human heart. For what this Great Professor did for my mental

life I can never be adequately grateful, but the vision of a Christlike, sympathetic manhood he granted me that frosty morning surpasses all.

"They say" that one of the Great Professor's chiefest disciples, a man of rare learning and skill—a Bishop, in fact—is soon to publish the story of his life. Let God be thanked! We know all too little of the lives that have turned the world upside down, and of those who have restrained it from intellectual suicide. "Let knowledge grow from more to more." This modest endeavor to set forth the faithful stewardship of a Great Character makes no attempt at biography. Intimate acquaintance, historic facts, fitness for such a task, are all wanting. These paragraphs are but a loyal student's "recollections." They have to do only with the discharge of a great man's duty of stewardship.

If any should marvel that one who struggled laboriously through all the Great Professor's courses, was honored with a seat in his select "seminar," sat under his teaching for two full years and stretched a non-elastic mind to comprehend the hidden truths of psychology, epistemology, metaphysics, theism, ethics, and all the kindred mysteries, could really cherish any pleasant "recollections" at all, lo, here is the marvel; that this great man could make it so! Here was the man who could transform mystery into sunlight, and philosophy into rational rules of life.

When I think of what a diabolical fate might have done to rob the world of this prince among men I shudder. In my student days there was a story, quite possibly fictitious, that our Professor had spent his youth in New York City, as a humble "cabby," waiting for "fares" and "tips," and not even conscious that he had a brain worth fertilizing. Suppose that the good man who found him, awoke his mind, turned him toward the truth, set him in the path of knowledge, had not appeared, had been negligent of his stewardship!

And, again, after this great Thinker was ready for his task and on his throne of academic power, suppose he had been unmindful of his stewardship! He might have spent his years in high and solitary speculation. He might have presented a negative or a pessimistic philosophy of life. He might have spread abroad an atheistic, agnostic, or otherwise unsettling type of philosophic thought. He might have been flippant, and careless of his influence over youth. Self-exaltation, personal advancement, material profit, might have been his aim. For such conditions are not unknown in college circles.

But for what he was and what he did let the church and the world be thankful. He was a tireless seeker after the unadulterated truth. He knew that, whatever the immediate consequences might be, truth at length "makes free." He had a quenchless enthusiasm for reality—the real things of the intellect, the real things of life. He

had a horror of loose thinking—his contempt for "the fallacy of the universal" was delicious. He was a hater of shams and subterfuges. Self-seeking was both amusing and offensive to him—the thought of being "a candidate" for anything was beyond his comprehension. He had small charity for moral abnormalities, ingrowing consciences, morbid superstitions. His positive dictum, "The normal life always has the right of way," has saved one of his students from a hundred religious quagmires.

In constructive helpfulness his power was greater even than in the demolition of folly. Occasional and superficial listeners would sometimes charge him with pessimism. Not so those who followed him through. His great province was upbuilding. He assumed in advance the dignity, intelligence, and worth of man. He posited spiritual reality and built up his universe around this center. He could conceive no reality without God, and, this granted, all the puzzle of the universe became potentially soluble. In my student days the religious world was rent and distracted with strife over "higher criticism" and "evolution." It is, in my judgment, this Great Professor's "sun-clear" philosophy of "Personalism," more than any other contemporary cause, which has spared, in a peculiar measure, the church whose ministry he adorned the pangs and wastage of unprofitable debate, of bitter strife from shore to shore, over certain troublesome and controversial questions whose

solution is the province of philosophy and science rather than of religion.

At that period my own mind was distinctly hostile to both these topics of controversy, but that mattered little, for this great teacher had shown me the substantial meaning of a personal God and of the undying personal human life which springs from Him, which made these questions relatively unimportant either way. To-day both topics appear highly attractive, as suggestive of an even greater conception of the divine majesty; and even still it matters little, for with the personal God of a Christian theism I have the source, center, and end of all, and though "heaven and earth pass away" I have "a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." More than to any other teacher, book, subject, or earthly influence, a thousand former students owe, through all these years of groping, a steady, serene, and unfaltering faith in things divine. And this holds equally for a brilliant galaxy of conspicuous religious leaders in several great sister communions.

The influence of Borden Parker Bowne on the young people of his day was most profound. Though his life's services were given to one university, he lectured before the students of many schools, while young men and women, wise and unwise, believers and unbelievers, hung upon his words. There was spiritual power, solution for life's mysteries, help for life's burdens, strength

for overtested characters, in all his utterances. Profound philosophic truth, abstruse reasonings, baffling scientific theories, under the prism of his intellect were displayed before his youthful audiences in rainbow colors of helpfulness and beauty. Where he went courage, duty, patience, peace, obedience, loyalty, and faith sprang up. "'My Father worketh hitherto,' and worketh forevermore," was not only his reverent conception and statement of God's creative purpose; it was the maxim of his daily endeavor. He feared no foe, he feared no issue, he feared not the future. Even when they haled him as a "heretic" before the Sanhedrin of his church, those who stood by beheld a face like Stephen's and sensed the presence of his great avenger. Though technically he was altogether a college professor, practically he was a most effective preacher of the gospel, an evangelist sent to lead the youth of his day and the men of his generation into all the truth. And he also, "being dead yet speaketh."

CHAPTER III

EARTHQUAKE-PROOF

1. The White Church on a Hill

Intermittent services, of one sort and another, had been held for years in and around the little north-country village, sometimes in private homes, sometimes in school house or grove, but this was the first real church building the hamlet had ever known. And the people of the community were justly proud of their adventure. To be sure, not everybody was suited; one man said that the windows were so disgracefully small that nobody could ever see the words in his hymnbook; another complained at the harsh tone of the bell, and wished it had been bought from another dealer; and yet another prophesied that the structure would never be paid for. But these slight discords were drowned in the symphony of general rejoicing.

I remember as if it were yesterday the day of dedication. After a long, cold drive in the family buggy (only covered vehicles were known as "carriages"), we came in sight of the new meetinghouse. Beautifully white against the background of a gloomy autumn sky, with graceful steeple pointing heavenward, it inspired at once in our hearts an attitude of holy reverence. We entered the vestibule; a tall and solemn neighbor, the envy at that moment of every boy

within the village, was finishing the ringing of the "second bell," straining upward as far as his endless arms and legs could reach, then pulling the great rope down almost to the floor. Pastors might have their troubles, but the life of a sexton, like that of a locomotive engineer, was all holiday.

We passed into the auditorium—though we did not know till long afterward that it was an auditorium; it and the vestibule were the only rooms the building contained. It was a gorgeous sight. Three dazzling chandeliers hung from rippling circular plaques in the ceiling. The middle one was the most ornate of all—brass colored, and held four kerosene lamps; the others were of painted iron and held three lamps each. On the walls were several single lamps with dazzling reflectors. The much maligned windows were Gothic, set with plain glass, and shed a full daylight radiance over the scene. At the two entrance corners, leading from the vestibule, were stationed two ample, round, sheet-iron stoves, which in winter-time roared a red-hot welcome to all comers. Their black pipes ascended almost to the lofty white ceiling, then traversed horizontally the length of the church, and at last united over the edge of the pulpit platform and disappeared through a "thimble" in the ceiling. The pews were arranged in three sections, a wide middle section and two narrow ones abutting on the side walls, with two aisles running from the vestibule doors to the chancel.

In later days there were two rows of added ornaments—the dark, round, greasy-black spots on each side wall, just over the end seats, where the brethren with somnolent tendencies had leaned their oily heads as the sermon proceeded.

The dedication service began. The house was packed. A large choir, composed of all the elect voices of the village and led by a famous music-master imported for the occasion, surrounded a lofty cabinet organ whose intricate scroll-work ascended like a steeple, and rendered elaborate and unprecedented anthems. After the retiring presiding elder, whom my mother in a solemn whisper characterized as "one of the best men in all the world," had preached a great discourse, the new presiding elder attacked the problem of "raising the money." It was a long, long struggle, and before the task was complete many of the auditors had gone. But the job was well done. After "the elder" had landed all the "big givers" he came down jovially to what he called a "popular figure"—fifty dollars.

It was here I interfered. A little neighbor girl had succeeded in coaxing her father to respond to this fifty-dollar plea, and I opened upon mine. He shook his head. I persisted, but in vain. To my chagrin he gave a lesser amount, which was doubtless his best, but it was not many years before he was bearing the heaviest burdens of the church and making large offerings, to fill the gaps left open by ardent early givers who long since had forsaken all and fled. As for this day,

it closed as many another such day has done, and the little church began its struggle with a world of sin.

Often and often have I thought about this little church. How did it happen? What was the meaning of it all? Was it in the counsels of the Infinite? Did it fulfill any worthy mission? Did it discharge its sacred stewardship of social and spiritual helpfulness in the world? Was the sacrifice which built it justified, or could some sage, at this dedication, have appropriately asked, with the canny Judas: "To what purpose is this waste?" Many little white churches, early and late, have dotted the landscape, ultimately to suffer increasing neglect and to perish at last from the sight of men. Is it all worth while? What is the answer?

The answer is, faith—as it is with all building and with all endeavor. We sow in hope, leaving to God the harvest. But there are various aids to faith, and some of them the little church is sure to supply. This little church has done its best to justify its founding. That it was not always successful, or influential, I well remember. I recall the men and women who came and went, oblivious to the heavenly influences which enveloped them, little better, little worse, for their contact with this sanctuary. I recall the gang of restless, boisterous, inattentive boys, and the frivolous, whispering girls, who grew up in its Sunday school, and drifted away, some to lives of sin, some to honor, and some—God knows

whither. The church had its "ups and downs," men had their backslidings, the sermons were not always inspiring, nor the choir entertaining, nor the ushers cordial. Once the church was almost lost for debt. But those things do not tell the story.

All this time the little church was carrying on its work. It was touching human life in the impressionable years of infancy. It environed youth with restraining, uplifting influences. It stimulated them to loftier ideals. It took them, in all their frontier roughness or rural inexperience, and shaped them for nobler social intercourse and neighborly co-operation. It provided them an atmosphere for spiritual awakening and growth, and, for some, it was the Bethel place of a life-transforming experience. It gave to young men the opportunity for social contact with chaste and sweet young womanhood, and to unschooled maidens, ignorant of a rough world's wiles, the society of noble-minded manhood. It encouraged the development of a nucleus of godly men in the community, men who, at personal sacrifice, were ready to fight for temperance, chastity, clean conversation, decent reading matter, better schools, good literature, honesty in government, good will among men. Many years have passed since that dedication day, and still the little village is not yet an Eden; but it is world-diameters farther from the Sodom it might have become but for the little church.

And then, the leadership! Good men and noble

presided over the destinies of this rural sanctuary. To be sure, we had no famous pastors—not a man who ever got far beyond the humblest "grade" in his Conference. But these were "good men" to whom we listened week by week, men of lofty ideals, men who held truth more precious than rubies, who believed in good books, in "college," in an expanding mental life, an ever-growing spiritual life. I wish I had space to name them all and characterize their varied talents, for they were princes.

And for pastoral care there were others besides these—for some of us a Sunday-school teacher whose wise counsels and earnest invitations only the most stubborn could resist, and for all of us a great class leader, a leader of the old school, who never allowed an opportunity for helpfulness to go unimproved. A little snug, gruff Englishman he was, with a fringe of whiskers under his chin, gray bushy brows, crow's feet all round his eyes, and who always put his "h's" on where they should have been left off, and left them off where they should have been. Soft words from him would have been unthinkable, but he greatly loved a certain bashful young man, whom he pursued with an unrelenting determination to win him for the Kingdom. After this young man's conversion no stone was left unturned by this class leader to compel him to offer an open, even though reluctant, confession of his faith. A visit to his class meeting invariably resulted in an unmistakable and in-

escapable invitation to contribute a word of testimony. And for this helpful stimulus to a timid faith devout thanks will ever be made.

One glad day the very heavens opened above this little white church. It was in midsummer. Right in wheat-harvest our zealous pastor, with heart-yearnings for a deeper devotional life in his church, called us aside from our toils for a three-days' period of evangelistic endeavor, for heart-searching, and for a definite consecration to holier living. Some of us responded, with none too much enthusiasm, but with a conviction that the pastor was right and deserved our support. Friday and Saturday passed, and nothing happened. On Sunday morning a former pastor spoke. The congregation was not large, but before the service had proceeded far it was evident that "the Spirit of the Lord was present to heal" the wounded hearts of sin-sick men. The atmosphere was electric. The sermon, though wonderfully appropriate, was a mere incident. An invitation was soon given to all who wished to find God, or to seek a deeper work of grace, to come forward to the altar. A crowd rose up and pressed forward—a rare sight in this little village. The entire congregation were melted to tears.

In the audience was a sincere young man who was deeply dissatisfied with his spiritual state, and had been earnestly seeking for "new light to break forth" upon his pathway. I believe he thought he needed a "sanctified" heart. And he

had sought in vain, and his heart was heavy. As the crowd of "seekers" moved forward this young man arose to go with them, but paused to look back and see who else had responded. Away back by the entrance door stood an older young man, a former unfriendly schoolmate, whose fatal skill with frozen snow-balls had never been forgotten, and who had long led a stubborn and irreligious life. With him were his wife, none too highly esteemed in reputable society, and one or two children. All were sobbing aloud and were pressing into the aisle. At this unaccustomed sight our young friend's heart was melted. He looked forward to the altar, and lo it was filled from end to end with weeping penitents, as were all the front seats, and there was no room left for him.

That altar, he had supposed, was a necessity, but with a strangely enlarged vision he said to himself: "What matter? I will kneel right here, and God shall have all my heart!" With that he knelt between the pews, and said, without waiting to put it into words: "O God, here is my hateful, persecuting old schoolmate and his ungodly wife and untaught children. They are seeking your forgiveness. If you will, if you only can, forgive, and receive, and bless them, and make them Christians, you may forget the blessing I was seeking. I will gladly get along without." In that very moment of self-renunciation the heavens opened and the blessing came. Whatever that blessing was, however rightly or

wrongly diagnosed, it had arrived. Possibly it was only an emotional climax, a powerful psychological reaction, and probably what the young man received was not at all what he thought it was; nevertheless, it was a psychology which immediately transformed his character, changed his entire outlook on life, and landed him in the Christian ministry. And the young neighbor and his family were gloriously redeemed.

2. A Nineteenth Century Youth Movement

A little more than a hundred years ago, in 1824, or thereabout, began a most intensely interesting "youth movement," which reaches all the way down from Then to Now. In that year the youthful Rev. Amos Binney (Youth No. 1), afterward famous in ecclesiastical literature, a pastor in Taunton, Massachusetts, held some Methodist meetings in private houses in the little neighboring village of Raynham. Not much seems to have resulted from these meetings, and, as Raynham was a strong Congregational center, and well able to care for the religious needs of the community, there is no record that any other Methodist services were held there for a full half-century. A tiny germ, however, had been planted, the germ of a good man's faithful even though fruitless endeavor, and fifty years later it sprouted.

In the fall of 1873 the youthful Wilbur F. Steele (Youth No. 2), a senior in Boston Univer-

sity School of Theology, a son of the Rev. Professor Daniel Steele (whom three generations of former students, friends, and parishioners rise up to call blessed), and grandson of the aforesaid Rev. Amos Binney, arrived in the already ancient and staid New England town of Raynham, for the purpose of conducting services, and, if practicable, founding a Methodist church. No hilarious welcome awaited the fledgling preacher, and there was not a Methodist in town, excepting two young people (Youths Nos. 3 and 4) recently converted in adjoining towns and bent on having a Methodist church.

Late in January Mr. Steele arranged for a short but intensive evangelistic campaign, to begin on Friday night and run through Saturday and Sunday with as many meetings as it should prove desirable to hold. He invited to go with him and assist him three other young theologues (Youths Nos. 5, 6, and 7), among them the Rev. Marcus D. Buell, afterward well known from end to end of the land, and in other English-speaking countries, as the "Beloved Dean" of his Alma Mater, the School of Theology. These four preacher boys held their first meeting on Friday night, made pastoral calls through Saturday, and on Saturday night and all day Sunday conducted their evangelistic campaign, which was held in the old Unitarian church—freely offered for the purpose—with such interest that the church was packed on Sunday night with a multitude of people who had come out of curiosity

to see the "Methodist Show" and watch the "performances" of the recent converts.

In the audience that Sunday night, among the curious and careless, was a young lady, Abbie F. Lawrence by name (Youth No. 8), from the neighboring town of old Bridgewater. She had come to spend a week with a girl friend (Youth No. 9), and they had come out to the "revival" together. The preacher of the evening was the young Marcus Buell. His text was, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." After his sermon young Steele, the pastor, arose and earnestly "exhorted" all who would to begin the Christian life, taking as his theme the love and sacrifice of Jesus. After the new converts and seekers had come forward to the altar Mr. Steele went down into the congregation and began to invite personally such people as he knew.

The first person he addressed was an entire stranger, the young lady from Bridgewater. Beside her sat another young lady, whom he knew, and to whom he specially desired to give the invitation. When he spoke to the first young lady she refused his invitation and laughed in his face. The other young lady also replied in the negative. No sooner had the service closed than the first young lady came to Mr. Steele, confessing that she had told him that which was not true, and that she greatly desired to become a disciple. The other young lady also stayed, and all prayed and talked together, promising

to keep on praying until the seeker should find peace. Evidently, she found it before she left.

Young Abbie Lawrence had planned for a nice long week of pleasure with her friend in Raynham, but early on Monday morning she took the stage for Bridgewater. "Mother!" she exclaimed, bursting into the house, "Mother! I've been converted. I'm going to be a Christian. And, mother, we must have a Methodist church in Bridgewater!" No counsel of moderation, no prospective obstacle, availed to dissuade this energetic damsel from her purpose. She canvassed the village for material for her church. She found nine possibilities for "charter membership"—five with old musty "church letters," and rounded up four new ones. She and another person became the first two "probationers." Immediately a young student from Boston University, the Rev. George H. Baker (Youth No. 10), was secured as pastor, the old abandoned Swedenborgian church was rented for an auditorium, and on May 3, 1874, the first Methodist service in Bridgewater was held. It was a day of trembling hope and rejoicing.

But securing members, though the most important task essayed by this young lady, had not been the only difficult one. Money must be provided to pay the pastor's meager salary and the rent of the old building. Nothing daunted the young lady sallied forth, armed with a small subscription from her mother, and secured, bit by

bit, the requisite "promises to pay." Among the first to be solicited was a young working man (Youth No. 11), Ferdinand C. Gammons, who had once been a member of the church, but was taking a religious vacation. Unable to resist the plea of the charming young solicitor, the young man agreed to contribute fifteen dollars a year, and to attend services, on one condition—that he should not be asked to speak in meeting. At the very first class meeting held in the new church he was one of the first to speak, joined the church at the first communion, and, without interruption, has ever since been loyal in season and out. And his fifteen dollars have multiplied unto thousands and thousands. Moreover, within six months of this first interview, Miss Abbie Lawrence became Mrs. Ferdinand C. Gammons, and together they have lived and prayed and served and wrought for over half a century.

The growth of the little plant was not rapid or easy. In those days denominational comity was not yet out of the cradle, members of competing organizations looked askance at each other, and to almost the entire village the new church was an unwelcome interloper. One good deacon is reported to have wept when he heard the news, saying: "If the Methodists have got into Bridgewater, you can never get them out."

The pastoral care of the church was, of course, inadequate, as for years only student pastors, who must give most of their time to university classes, could be supported. Besides, the finan-

cial burdens which inevitably rested on so small a group gave little encouragement to outside people to cast in their lot with the new enterprise. Suppers, fairs, lecture courses, booths at the annual "cattle show," various unstewardship methods of securing money were called into requisition in those early years.

And yet the tiny church prospered. After five years of renting, the old Swedenborgian building was bought, for nine hundred dollars, renovated and repaired, and became the home of the society for forty years. Long afterward, during the pastoral term of this writer (Youth No. 12), and his helpful bride (Youth No. 13), then students in Boston, the old building was again remodeled, and yet once again before its final abandonment. Before the church had grown strong enough to support a full-time pastor, a long line of Boston theologues had made it their financial support and practice-ground, among them Charles H. Morgan, Robert E. Smith, Thomas J. Everett and Joseph B. Hingeley (Youths Nos 14, 15, 16, and 17), all afterward men of mark in their denomination. Yet, through all the years, the love, courage, faith, sacrifice, and indomitable purpose of the church's founder and of her loyal companion were the bulwark, inspiration, and motive power of the church's life. There is no office in the church which Mr. Gammons has not been called upon to fill, while his wife for years labored as organist, as superintendent of the Primary Department, and later as teacher of the

Young Men's Bible Class, whose members, now widely scattered, many of them veterans of the World War, remember her with reverence and filial love.

Long years, and many, passed away. The young workingman became an inventor, a manufacturer, a capitalist. Diligent study and toil and fortunate investment in cotton machinery made him a very rich man. But, for him and his wife, riches never turned the head or spoiled the character. Comfort came to ease their burdens, hospitality grew to large proportions, but their one luxury was to serve and promote the little church, and their great ambition to so firmly establish and stabilize it that no future misfortune could ever destroy it or interfere with its great work of exalting Christ in the community.

Just forty years from the happy early summer day on which the little church was opened a beautiful and stately granite edifice, the "Gammons Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church," a gift complete, with furniture, organ, piano, hymnals, psalters, communion set, from Mr. and Mrs. Gammons, and probably worth, at to-day's building costs, not less than one hundred thousand dollars, was dedicated to the service of Almighty God. It was a day of great rejoicing, offering hope, and refuge, and blessing to multitudes yet to come. But to none was the joy so deep and unalloyed as to the two souls who had given their lives, and now were offering their

possessions, to the worship of the King of Kings. In addition, it is whispered, these consecrated and now aged servants have provided funds for the endowment of this church, its pastor, janitor, and others; for the Veteran Ministers of the church, as well as for other important philanthropies. Among the minor but more recent benevolence activities, and one of the most interesting ones, was the financing of the "Gammons Memorial Stewardship Essay Prize Contest," which, in 1926, enrolled successful contestants in France, China, and the United States, and distributed twelve hundred dollars in prizes to the winners.

The most beautiful feature of this unusual church is the "Good Shepherd" window, a gift of Mrs. Gammons in memory of her mother. One dark evening, soon after the building was finished, a little boy (Youth No. 18), in company with his teacher, was passing the front of the church just at the moment when the janitor was turning on the electric lights in the interior of the building. As the light came on, the figure of the "Good Shepherd," caring for his flock, gleamed through the lighted window and out into the darkness. Grasping his teacher's hand the boy exclaimed, in awed tones, "Jesus has come!" A moment later the light was switched off, the picture disappeared, and the little boy, with most distressed look and with tones of sorrow, exclaimed: "Oh, he's gone!"

When Mrs. Gammons heard of this she at once

gave orders for an electric device which would automatically illuminate the window at dusk, and keep it lighted until late at night, every day in the year. This gospel beacon has been an inspiration, and has preached its sermon to thousands of passers by, including a multitude of students in the great State Teachers' College located in the block just beyond. Precious among the keepsakes of Mrs. Gammons is a beautiful little poem composed by a young lady student (Youth No. 19), a member of the Roman Catholic Church, who had seen and been blessed by the vision from the window.

No story of this Youth Movement would be complete without including another church edifice built by this zealous servant of Christ. One day in changing trolley cars at Freetown, a little electric junction point "down on the Cape," Mrs. Gammons met some thirty pupils coming from the public school (Youths Nos. x, y, z, etc.). "Where have you been?" she kindly inquired.

"To school!"

"Do you go to Sunday school?"

"What's that?"

"Why, where we go to learn about God, and such things."

"No, we never heard about it."

"What! Never learned about God, and heaven, and Jesus?"

"Naw. Never learned about nothin'."

And this in Massachusetts!

Then and there this good woman resolved that

these children should no longer live without the gospel. She organized a Sunday school, solicited money for a little church, and soon, in spite of strong opposition but favored by an almost miraculous Providence, she and her helpers had erected and dedicated a mission church. Upon the new building her nephew (another youth) installed a fine memorial bell inscribed, "God is love." When the little folks first saw the inscription they asked: "What does it say?" They were told. A few Sundays after that the children came to Mrs. Gammons and said: "Every time the bell rings it says: 'God is love,' 'God is love.'"

Only recently this faithful woman received a letter from a young man (still another youth), who had attended this mission church, but was now graduating from high school, which said: "I never can tell you what the little church did for me. I never in my life heard a sermon until I heard the first one there, on 'The Tears of Jesus.' It was this that brought me to him."

In 1924 Dr. Wilbur F. Steele, who, fifty years before, had led the laughing young lady to Christ, came from his far distant home in Denver, and visited for the first time the church in Bridgewater. He came unannounced, and no one recognized the gray-headed man. Mr. and Mrs. Gammons were sitting quietly and humbly in the back pew. After the pastor's sermon Doctor Steele stepped forward to the chancel and asked permission to speak. It was granted,

and he told them the story of the young lady's conversion fifty years before. Though the church at Raynham had proved a failure, and nothing there remained of all his youthful toil, this evidence of his faithful stewardship remained. The "sower" had lived to see the long harvest.

3. Character, That's All

The first time I ever set eyes on "Johnny" was at an evening party. And at that particular party I was at a distinct disadvantage, for, though a most willing candidate for all forms of enjoyment, I was not technically "among those present." Being rather too small to enjoy or to be trusted at such social functions I had been carefully bundled off to bed, in a little room adjoining the one in which the chief festivities were held. But "iron bars do not a prison make," nor can partition doors exclude the prying vision of curious boyhood. Through a convenient crack in that bedroom door I saw the party, and among its early comers was Johnny.

And he was a sight to behold—a youngster in the glory of his early manhood. A light blue eye, a round and ruddy cheek, bursting with health and good humor, light curly hair, a few golden freckles, just the right tint, and a strong, athletic, erect frame, perfectly formed, impressed my youthful imagination that I was looking upon a veritable Apollo, though I did not know the name. His modesty was little short of excessive, and the maidenly pink which constantly

flushed his face gave him the heightened color which must have endowed David the shepherd boy with such distinguished beauty. But, though modest, this glorious youth was evidently so genuine, so spontaneous, so vital, and so friendly that he at once found himself in the front line of the merry-makers.

Of all that took place that evening I know little else, for curiosity soon gave place to slumber, and the program went on without me. The last thing my sleepy memory recalls is a vision of Johnny, blindfolded, with a young lady standing behind his chair and solemnly repeating: "Heavy, heavy, heavy hangs over thy head. Fine, or superfine?" It was, I think, a very decorous party, though it lasted till midnight. Some youthful friendships were no doubt cemented, and maybe some destinies changed, but that is not unusual, nor perhaps to be deplored.

It was not long after this that I again saw Johnny and began to get better acquainted with him. He was very agreeable to younger boys, and soon became a close friend of the family and a welcome visitor in our home. Such characters are worth having on one's list of acquaintances. This young man was possessed of one of the most equable and dependable temperaments I ever knew. His disposition was as near perfection as human nature ever gets. As firm as a rock, as unchangeable as the pole star, just stopping short of stubbornness, susceptible to terrific indignation, his soul was as unruffled as the

bosom of eternal peace. He was not oblivious to the varied environment which surrounds us, he was a keen observer of all sorts of men and knew of life's pitfalls and passions, but his life was a life of innocence and purity.

In all his life I never knew him to do a wrong or unkind deed, to say a harsh or profane word, to make a selfish plan, or apparently to think a shameful thought. How he kept his poise I never could determine. If temptation came to him, as to other men, he seemed ready-panoplied to resist it. I suspect that, at the very beginning of his manly life, he had offered to the grace of God an abundant entrance to the fortress of his soul, and that therein lay the secret of his triumph over self.

Johnny had become well settled in life, had a wife and little son and a farm of his own, when he felt a distinct call to the Christian ministry. It seemed strange and unreasonable that God should call him, at this late date, to forsake all his plans and prospects, and launch out into new ventures, and he tried to silence the voice that seemed to call him. But the voice persisted. He talked it over with his wife. They were both devoted disciples, and felt the lure of a more intimate service, and they recognized that a call from heaven was not to be refused—but was it from heaven? Were they not misled by fancies born of an intemperate zeal? They listed their handicaps—very inadequate education, little contact with the larger social world, the respon-

sibilities of a family, wife and baby to provide for, no resources but the little farm, still heavily debt-burdened and likely to provide only a fraction of the expense of an education. They could not go.

Then came one of those little providential happenings—the pastor was to be away on Sunday evening. Somebody must fill the pulpit. Johnny was always to be depended upon, could he not do it? Would he not attempt it? Why, yes, he could at least do that much, he could get up and talk a little. That was his "first sermon." The subject was "Prayer." The church was full. Strange how interested even godless neighbors are in any new venture of faith. Good sportsmanship applauds even when heroic men dare to attempt impossible and unreasonable tasks for God. We wondered how the thing would come out—a bashful, untutored farmer boy trying to preach the gospel! But before the evening was over we knew that the hand of God had been laid upon him. The message went home to every heart.

Then another test. An emergency call came to go to a nearby village and preach the morning sermon. Of course that was out of the question. It was Saturday, after a week of labor on the farm, and he had no "barrel of sermons" on which he could draw. But the need was great, and before night he yielded, and set to work upon his sermon. Now, sermons do not come instantaneously to inexperienced and unlettered

young men, and the task proved long and laborious. In the early hours of the winter Sunday morning his wife awoke and, looking into his room, saw him still bending over his task. "When I saw him thus pouring out his energies for God," she told me long afterward, "I loved him as I had never loved before." His sermon reached its mark that day.

Of his struggles with Greek and Hebrew, with heavy and unaccustomed themes, and with the wolf at the door, I need not tell. Four years of study, spiced with janitor service, working as assistant librarian, and other means of support, brought him his graduation. And then the years of faithful ministry. This ministry was never conspicuous. He had started too late for the great prizes. And he knew it. In all his life this royal soul never filled a "desirable appointment." He was an obedient soldier in the great "rank and file." He filled charges that other men did not desire to have. To say that he was always satisfied with this would be to belie human nature and belittle his own manhood. Every normal man aspires to success, to conquest, to better conditions. But he asked for nothing, and with what was given him he devoutly made himself content. It was "the Lord's work," it must be done, if called to do it he would do it well, and do it with a song of gladness.

His ministry was honest, simple, sincere, helpful, efficient. His people loved him, they trusted

him. He was their friend and counselor and guide. He powerfully affected their lives and character. And as long as he would stay he was welcome. His pastoral terms were long. Year after year he remained, ministering to and loved by the same congregations. In middle life he retired from the pastorate, not because he wished to retire, but in obedience to a call of duty. But his ministry of love continued. Strong and robust, he worked at humble tasks that those dependent upon him for sustenance and education might not suffer.

Of his conversion to the principles of Christian stewardship his wife once told me. It was after his retirement from the pastorate. "He had never believed in offering his tenth," she said, "though I had often wished that he would, and had suggested it to him. 'No,' he would say, 'Our income is so small, we cannot do it. We ought not to attempt it.' But one day, during the World War, I found him paying installments on a small Liberty Bond. I said, 'That will come in handy later on.' 'That,' said he, 'Is for the Conference Claimants' fund. I am tithing now, and that will just complete my tithe, and I want the poor worn-out preachers to have it, some of them have so much less than we.' "

A faithful steward! But his best stewardship was not that, it was the stewardship of a life, a talent, a superb character, entirely dedicated to God and fellow man.

In a few weeks he was stricken. A giant oak

was laid low. "Know ye not," my heart cried out, "that a prince and a great man is fallen this day in Israel?" Poor he was, "yet making many rich." To his sons he left no fortune, but a noble heritage, and to those who had attended upon his ministry or been led to Christ on his invitation, a priceless example. "Unknown" he was, to men, "and yet well-known" to God.

I wonder if, in our spiritual warfare, we have yet bethought ourselves to pay due tribute to "the unknown soldier." On each Memorial Day the President of our republic lays on the grave of the "unknown soldier" in Arlington, a costly wreath of flowers, in tribute to one who, in obscurity, died in his country's behalf, thus paying tribute to all soldiers and all true loyalty. When a pioneer aviator first crosses the ocean he finds the grave of the "unknown soldier" of France, and lays his garland there. Has not the time arrived for all true ministers of the cross, and all true followers of Jesus, to render more constant and thoughtful tribute to the unknown, unsung, unremembered "common" men who, having faithfully fulfilled their stewardship to God, now rest from their labors? Not alone with pensions for old age, with pittances for widows and orphans, but reverence and emulation for well-spent lives and royal characters.

CHAPTER IV

DYNAMIC OFFICIALISM

1. The Pastor Who Interferes

No sooner had the Rev. Mr. A. entered upon the pastorate of our little village church than things began to happen. It would be stretching the truth to say that his coming created a sensation, for at that period small country places had not attained to the dignity of sensations; they were, however, susceptible to profound excitement. Rumor spread with lightning rapidity, and, in less time than it takes to print a newspaper, this little mid-West community was all stirred up.

To begin with, nobody knew anything about him, and that in itself looked suspicious. Though he appeared to be a man in mature life, perhaps thirty-five or forty years old, his name had never been seen in the Conference lists, he had supplied no neighboring churches, and none of the delicious gossip which usually spreads a halo round the new minister was available for circulation. Like a bolt from the blue he had descended into our pulpit, taken possession of his pastoral prerogatives, and taken for granted that with his arrival the meeting was open for business.

Immediately noticeable was the fact that he

spoke an alien tongue, not foreign—it was good enough English, but different from what we were accustomed to, and slightly akin to what we characterized as "tony." Those who sat in the seat of the scornful intimated that his speech was visibly tinged with "affection." The fact is, he left out his "r's" where they should have been kept in, and put them in where he should have kept them out. He referred to himself as "Pastuh," invited all who could sing to attend the choir rehearsal and "take a paht," and referred to the chilling blasts which swept down our unpaved streets as "rawr." Of course the elect could overlook such things, and would soon adjust themselves, but whether "sinners" might be expected to quail before such mealy-mouthed language was doubtful. But when we learned that he had come from Brooklyn, and had always been used to this dialect, we felt that he should have the benefit of the doubt, and laboriously tried to adjust our mantle of charity.

That the new pastor's wife was a very talented woman, and had a trained, sweet and powerful soprano voice, was both for and against him. To some this appeared as a very definite gain to the church, as well as a social asset; to others it was the signal for new rivalries and suspicions. His children—their number as reported in advance ranged all the way from one to seven—were reputed to be very lively, probably mischievous, and the older boy a "regular little devil." This was, of course, entirely orthodox and presented

no more than the usual handicap, but provided fresh material for head-shakings and exclamations.

The good man proceeded, on the very first Sunday morning, to attempt the conquest of his people's hearts and to get into familiar relations with his charge. The day was stormy and forbidding, the auditorium, which comprised all the church there was, was damp and cold, the stoves refused to "draw," and the stove-pipes poured out clouds of blue and bitter smoke. The few auditors present, scattered thinly here and there, hugged their shivering sides and wrung their chilling hands. But of all this the new pastor took no unfriendly note. He spoke briefly, familiarly, quietly, not eloquently, but with pointed and practical application, more as a novice or a layman than as a "pulpit orator," and closed his simple talk by telling his hearers that he had come among them to be their friend and helper and to do a "great deal of loving." How this first sermon was received in general I have never heard, probably with mixed feelings and but partial approval, but the last sentence went straight to the heart of a soul-hungry young "father in Israel," and from him long afterward I heard the story. It changed his life history and that of his family.

Then the unexpected happened. The pastor threw a bombshell right at his congregation. He told them that at nine o'clock the next Sunday morning they would all meet to "organize the

Sunday school." What, right in the middle of the autumn? Impossible! Preposterous! Nobody would come, no teachers could be found, pupils would never think of attending Sunday school in the winter. Why, it was all we could do to keep the school running through the summer. It had never been done, never could be done, and, besides, it was unreasonable and unnecessary. There was civil war. But the next Sunday morning the school was organized, the new minister's wife was made superintendent, the pupils came, teachers were found, valuable experiences gained "in Brooklyn" were applied, song books secured, "lesson leaves" ordered, the numbers grew, enthusiasm waxed high, spiritual blessings descended, and from that day to this—more years than I shall tell—the little church has had its Sunday school through all the changing seasons.

The first thing I myself discovered about this pastor was that he liked boys. His own children had playthings—balls, games, "authors," and such like—and lots of them. If these parents ever hoped to make saints of their "mischievous children," they at least gave them the opportunity for normal development. Their first visit to our country home was in the evening. It lasted only about ten minutes, but it was full of "pep" and good cheer and intense personal interest. They paid just as much attention to "us children" as to the older folks, learned our names, and complimented them, greeted us like

human beings, and went away in a whirl of optimistic but restrained energy. This was the first of many a delightful visit. We did not hang any crape on our doorknob when this preacher came.

Every fourth of July Brother A. and his wife, and usually the children, drove out to our house, partly for a pleasant holiday and partly to escape the noise of the village celebration. But they cast no gloom on our patriotic enthusiasm, nor shrank from the smell of powder upon our hands nor the dirt upon our faces. They were full of appropriate juvenile stories, stunts, and guessing games. They brought along a grand supply of firecrackers, watched our famous naval battle between the heavily armed monitors, "DeLesseps" and "Nautilus," on the little pond by the dam in the spring lot, and helped us at night with our pitch-pine torches, sky-rockets and Roman candles. What the trustees of the church would have thought, I am afraid to say, but this pastor bound us to his heart, his church, and his faith "with hooks of steel."

But this good pastor caused me a lot of trouble. He interfered with my peace of mind, he meddled with my complacency, he asked me embarrassing questions. He had a way of asking me, at the most natural and appropriate times and in the most good-natured and courteous way, a way which forestalled all frivolity and yet so diplomatic and matter-of-course: "Are you a Christian?"

"Well, what do you mean by being 'a Christian'?" I would reply. I very well knew, and suspect that he knew, that I was all the time trying, in my boyish way, to be a Christian, saying my prayers, repenting daily of my "sinful tempers"—a disciple secretly, for fear of others, but conscious that there were depths of knowledge and experience that I had not had, nor could expect to have, until I had taken up my cross, made whole-hearted profession, and committed myself unreservedly to the leadership of Christ. "But you know what I mean—Are you going to school to Christ?"

"Going to school to Christ!" How often in after years have I thought of that, and wished that I could fathom the full depth of its meaning, and wished that I had always been, and could always be, a worthy and diligent pupil of that great Teacher! This ideal the pastor kept pressing home. He did not bore me with it, he knew when to stop. And he doubtless knew too that though I dreaded the subject, and tried to avoid it, my youthful mind was really hungry for what he had to give, and would be really disappointed if he failed to return to the attack. And, like a true fisher of men, he persisted. One day he took me for a long drive in the country. I supposed that it merely happened so, but now I know that he had deliberately laid siege to my stubborn heart, and had planned it all in advance. "Are you a Christian?" was the theme of conversation on that pleasant journey, and on

that day I think my unworthy life was given to him as a trophy—the seeker after souls had won his case.

One thing I shall ever regret. In my timidity and slowness of thought, perhaps my obduracy, I never gave this good man the joy of knowing what he had done for me. To him, and equally to his tireless and highly accomplished wife, who for three years was my faithful Sunday-school teacher, I owe more than to all the rest of the world, aside from my father's house, for such religious purpose as has been mine through the years. But they had gone from our church before I really got upon my feet, knew my own mind, or found courage openly to confess my Lord. But if, in the heavenly world to which they have gone, "numbers" are of any consequence, let me be written down in the column of their pastoral acquisitions.

When this pastor left his church he left it completely. Weddings and funerals and social events belonged henceforth to his successor. Yet, though he dropped his charge, he never dropped his interest in the lives to whom he had ministered. We still were in his prayers, and if at any time the opportunity came to do us spiritual good, he hastened to embrace it. Years afterward, in my more mature youth, he came back for a few days, at the pastor's request, to assist in a brief period of summer evangelism, and it was here, searching for a clean heart and new light upon life's duties, that I received the

most definite and priceless religious experience of my life.

But here temptation entered. The new light which had come to me had profoundly stirred my emotional life, and for three days I lived "upon the mountaintop." I supposed that this was always to continue, and that any cessation would be proof of divine disfavor. "Brother A." was sojourning at our house, and sweet were the seasons of spiritual converse and family devotion we all enjoyed together. I was teaching country school a few miles away and daily walking from my home and back again.

Every day was sunshine. On the third day I awoke to find the sky overcast and a thick gloomy fog settled over the land. And with the fog and gloom had come a denser cloud of spiritual blackness and doubt which enveloped mind and heart and drove all joy away. What was the matter? What sin had I committed? Had I lost forever all hope of regaining the "heavenly places" in which for three days I had walked with my Lord? Oh, how heavy the heart of an untried youth can be!

When, after breakfast, I set out for school, Brother A. said, "Let me go a little way with you." I was in no mood for company, but welcomed any relief. Walking was not easy for this good man. He had been wounded in the Civil War, but on he trudged with me, mile after mile. "You have had a wonderful experience now, my boy," he said, "but you will have some dark days

and many a temptation." (How could he know that I was at this very moment in the Slough of Despond?)

"You know," said he, "that for days now you have been very happy; you have actually been 'walking by sight.' You cannot expect always to do that. God wants you to know how to walk by faith, to walk courageously and confidently when you cannot see him, or even feel his presence, or see the path in front of you, or even recall a precious promise from his word."

And so he opened my eyes, and cheered me, and put me back upon the highway. And how many times, in after years, have I thanked him for this lesson on "walking by faith."

This good man, who knew so well to help his fellowmen, could not himself escape the sorrows and temptations common to men. He "interfered" in behalf of our souls, but others interfered with him—criticized, slandered, opposed, but he kept right on, breast forward, until he won the love and the confidence of all who ever knew him and a multitude beside. This man who knew the heart of youth, its spirit, its temptations, its perplexities, its follies, and yet who loved it, and was not afraid to tackle the terrific problem of its redemption; this man who knew the spirit of the world, and had felt and partaken of it, yet had deliberately renounced and put it away, has left for me an example of the stewardship of life, of opportunity, of pastoral responsibility, which I can never forget,

and with which I pray the church may be more and more richly endowed in days to come.

2. An Inquisitive Superintendent

Early and late I have heard a good many aspersions cast upon district superintendents, and I doubt not that some of them have been deserved. Indeed, if I should take the trouble to rake over the ashes of memory, I am not sure but I could turn up one or two things from personal experience that, put in the form of appropriate invective, would make interesting reading. I have had superintendents whose ability to promise seemed to me far greater than their disposition to perform, some who were more skillful at scenting out trouble than in curing it, and others who had a wonderful talent for minding other people's business. But all this is simply to say that superintendents are human, and that these faults are to be found in men of every calling.

All things considered, the superintendents I have known have been patient, devoted, skillful and earnest men, seeking above everything else the welfare of the kingdom of God, and giving constantly of their days, nights, prayers and treasure for its promotion. How much they may have to bear because of inefficiency, ignorance, stupidity, selfishness, and stubbornness on the part of those whom they are appointed to superintend, I have no means of knowing, though I suspect the burden is not light.

But what has seemed to me to be the most conspicuous characteristic of the superintendent of whom I am about to write is inquisitiveness. Whether this particular type of inquisitiveness was a vice or a virtue I leave to my readers to decide. Before I illustrate this trait, however, let me mention some of the rare good qualities which this excellent man possessed:

He was frank and friendly. Though many years my senior he came into my study like a big generous brother. Unassuming, democratic, as ready to receive as to give counsel, as eager for advice as though he had not spent a long, conspicuous, and successful life in the ministry.

I shall never forget his first visit to my church. It was a village and country circuit, with four different preaching places. And it was my first appointment. I had just landed there, a raw recruit, fresh from college, well supplied with intellectual conceit, but with absolutely no experience as a pastor, and with just three sermons in my "barrel." It was likewise his first appointment as district superintendent. Having filled several of the most prominent pastorates in the Conference, he was now entering upon a new sort of responsibility. His coming was a life-saver to me, for I had found the new task a wilderness of unforeseen perplexities, had just about reached the end of my resources, and was ready to deluge him with questions and problems.

His answer to my first puzzle was characteristic of the man, revealing his natural frankness,

accessibility, and humbleness of mind. It failed to solve my problem, but it gave me in a flash a bit of information which was worth a thousandfold more than the complete answer to all my troubles could have been. With a whimsical sort of helpless yet by no means defeated smile he replied in a kindly confidential way: "I haven't the slightest idea. You know as much about it as I do. You know this is a new job for me too."

Astounding revelation! Even gray-haired ministers, then, do not know everything, but have to face and solve their problems afresh every day, as they come to them! Here am I, now, crushed to earth, smothered, submerged by my ignorance and stupidity, knowing less than the least of all ignoramuses; yet here is a learned, shrewd, experienced officer who knows no more about this thing than I. Perhaps everyone else is ignorant too, until he finds out for himself. If that is the case, I have an even start with every other man, with all the world, and can, if I will, work out my own salvation, even though with fear and trembling, to the uttermost minutiæ of my task. Behold, nothing shall be impossible to me.

Not long ago in my presence a man made bold to label himself a gentleman. Now, there are so many sorts of gentlemen, and so many and varied standards in the minds of so many sorts of people, that it is rather difficult, and equally hazardous, to decide in such a case. From all appearances, however, I seriously questioned if

the man had correctly classified himself. But in the case of this superintendent there was never any question. In any sort of society, high or low, crude or cultured, he would have been promptly and unanimously acknowledged a gentleman born and bred. Modesty, quiet reserve, courtesy, poise, assurance, self-forgetfulness, reverence, courage, fairness—all the long list of high requirements he met in full. He was now in a position of power and influence, yet he never bluffed, or boasted, or swaggered, nor ever sought for self-advertisement. He was a man of authority, yet he never pushed or prodded or threatened. He was a model officer, and accomplished great things, but as a leader and not a driver. And his word was the word of honor. With what added joy and smoothness could the machinery of the church be run if all officials were like-minded!

But he was inquisitive. He wanted to know about my plans, my achievements, my successes, my mistakes and failures. Then, without attempting to talk about them to my official board, or to the other ministers of the district, he thought them all over in his own mind and began to shape my own psychology to deal with them in the wisest way. He did not praise unduly, he did not blame, he did not scold, he did not offer advice; he talked things over with me, as though he were discussing matters in general, and as naturally as two college chums would discuss their mutual affairs. He set before me fine and

high ideals, and led me to wish to live up to them. Without my knowing it, he taught me in parables, as did the greater Master in days of old. When I had spent an afternoon with him I knew how to be a nobler and better minister, and was already on the way.

He was curious about my intellectual pursuits. He wanted to know what I was studying, and made me see the wealth of possibility in the very thing I was at the moment engaged upon. He was interested to know what books I was reading, and, as though he were searching out hidden treasures for himself, he "browsed around" among the books of my meager library, taking down this and that from the shelves, offering comments and suggestions here and there. He was never so busy with "very, very important matters," which rushed him away from my presence and hurried him off on the first train, that I failed to get the help for which I had been waiting. He always had time to think, and talk, and treat me as though I were a really worthwhile part of the great machine. To have such a man handle and comment on one's books, to touch them, to even look at them, is an inspiration. To have such a man linger in one's study, chatter on promiscuously, breathe the same atmosphere, look out of the same windows, is in itself a mental quickening, a spiritual benediction, and leaves on all the surroundings "the odor of sanctity."

He was solicitous about my thinking. He was

eager for me to be broad-minded, not narrow, either in my sympathies, my theology, or my churchmanship. Those were days in which it was a trifle hazardous for an older minister to advise a younger one to be "broad" or "liberal," and, to his credit be it said, he was the last man to arouse needless fears, stir up senseless strife, or unsettle the faith of the weakest. But he taught me to be venturesome in faith and courageous in my thinking. He cautiously gave me occasional glimpses into the enlarging conceptions of his own mind, and helped me to see that breadth of view and charity in judgment may be consistent with the purest motives and the most sacrificial faith.

Steering me clear of "heresy," he taught me charity toward "heretics"; displaying for me the excellencies rather than the faults of other communions, he awoke in me a deeper love and loyalty to my own; not concealing from me the faults and sins of men, he yet enabled me to realize as never before the loftiness and majesty of their sonship to God. But for him I might have turned out an intense and bigoted zealot; with his help I became confirmed, I trust, as a Christian.

He was inquisitive about my future. He wished me to develop into a wise, practical, strong and useful minister. He sought to help me plan judiciously, tried to mark out for me a successful career. When I left him for another and distant field he administered no parting slap

or kick, but sent me on with words of high and cordial commendation. Among my choicest treasures is a faded letter he wrote in my behalf in the long ago. If superintendents are really included in the divine pattern for the church on earth, God give us such as this.

3. My First Encounter With a Bishop

It was a bitter, bleak day in March. Cruel old Winter was throwing his final spasm of spite at the entering of Spring. Howling blasts and drifting snow swirled round the little brick railroad station in a smart little inland city. It was late in the afternoon. Two young schoolboys stood at the window, gazing out and mentally shivering at the fierceness of the storm, yet comfortably sensible of the presence of the great glowing, quivering, red-hot coal stove at their backs. But for them the waiting room was deserted, and the only other sign of life was the "click, click, click" of the telegraph instrument in the inner office. They themselves had no special reason to be there on such a day, but the last hours of spring vacation were hanging heavy on their hands, and they had sauntered in to see who might be returning on the afternoon train for the final term of school.

Suddenly the front door swung open, the boisterous wind blew it far back, scattering a great sprinkling of frosty flakes and sleet away across the room, and two men entered, the younger man, courteously making way for the

other, and carefully closing the door behind him. This younger man the two boys at once recognized as the pastor of the church they attended, a veritable "gentleman of the old school," whose pulpit ministrations, friendly manner, and evidently sincere interest in everybody's welfare, had made a familiar figure on the streets of the little city. But that this pastor knew them, or, if he did, would recall their names or take the trouble to recognize them there, they did not suspect.

The older man was a stranger. He had a quiet, composed, pallid, intellectual face, and was evidently a man of thoughtful habit and of experience with men. Though his countenance was calm and peaceful he seemed feeble and careworn, and to the boys his evidently stalwart frame appeared stooped and withered. Probably some faithful but "worn-out" preacher, whose days of humble usefulness were spent, and whom the good pastor was tenderly escorting to his train.

Hardly had these lads finished their quick mental inventory when the pastor looked over toward them and immediately gave them smiling recognition. "Come here, boys," he said, "I want you to meet this man. Bishop Simpson, allow me to present Brother —— and Brother ——," calling us each by name.

Wonder of wonders! Had the millennium arrived? Why, even the upper-classmen didn't know us, usually couldn't so much as see us, but

here was Doctor M., pastor of the "First Church," calling us by name, introducing us to a friend, and that friend a real live bishop, and, of all bishops, Bishop Simpson! What we said, I do not know. Whether we remembered our company manners and acquitted ourselves creditably, or whether we blushed and stammered and shuffled, I have not the slightest recollection. Fortunately, our mothers were not present to observe. One of us at least had never before so much as seen a bishop, and could hardly think of one as being "a man of like passions" with ourselves. We had heard, and wondered, and dreamed, and, in imagination, viewed afar off. Had we not been so taken by surprise we should undoubtedly have exclaimed with Moses, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

The bishop, however, showed no signs of confusion. He bore the shock with easy grace, evidently quite accustomed to meeting strangers. And now occurred the most amazing thing—the bishop began to talk to us, quietly, familiarly, as though it were the most natural thing in the world. I cannot recall a word he uttered. I wish I could, for it sank into my young and susceptible spirit like showers upon a thirsty land. But I well recall the purport of it all, though only a moment was spent. He made us feel the worth of life, the preciousness of young manhood, the pricelessness of opportunity, the wide range of possibility opening up before us, even us, and helped us to see that the forces of good

were waiting to co-operate with us, and the world ready to be blessed by our ministry.

To this day I cannot comprehend it. Here was a rare occurrence. In our presence was a bishop laden not only with many years of laborious service, but facing responsibilities and ecclesiastical problems of which we were not able to conceive. And General Conference less than two months away! And here was a "prominent pastor," filling one of the strategic charges of his Conference, a man who knew its innermost secrets and in his measure held in his hands its destinies. How genuinely he needed every moment of the bishop's time and counsel, and how timely the bishop's opportunity to consult this pastor's opinions! And yet they gave the time to us! Why did they not at least pass us off, after this condescending introduction, and resume their own important considerations? Why did not this pastor take this bishop by the buttonhole, back him up into the corner, and in a subdued voice "talk politics"? I do not know. I only know what happened.

Years after this, when I was an apprentice in the ministry, I went a long distance to hear another "great ecclesiastic" preach. His eloquence moved me profoundly. My whole heart went out to him. Perhaps I faintly detected in his speech the "loud sounding cymbals," but he was manifestly inspired. He was preaching on my hobby—foreign missions. As he finished he held out to his audience a golden opportunity;

any who wished to shake hands with him might do so, if they would leave a silver "quarter" in his hand, for the help of some worthy cause he had underwritten.

"Here is my chance," my rapturous soul exclaimed. I want to help this enterprise, and I haven't shaken hands with a—great ecclesiastic since that day in my boyhood so long ago." And, besides, this great man and I had something in common; his first charge had joined the one which had now become mine. We were neighbors, with only an interval of years. Besides, I now had on my charge some aged members who had once been members of his church, and who often recalled with love and reverence this token of providential favor. I would tell him of them, and of my happy location, and share with him this common joy.

With gladness of heart I approached the radiant presence, reached for his apostolic palm, pressed my grateful quarter into it, and briefly told him how a happy fate had linked us, and named our mutual friends. He looked down upon me from an infinite distance, as Zeus might have looked down from high Olympus upon a worm, fumbled my hand with a fleeting and perfunctory squash, swelled up like a pouter pigeon, and bellowed: "You know them, do you? Well, remember me to them. Don't forget it, now. Don't you forget it. You'll remember, will you? Don't you forget!" As though I were an errand boy, a very tiny errand boy, and must be solemnly

charged with duty, lest I run away to my marbles and neglect my errand. And he was right, of course, for he was a "very busy man," and a great one, and I was expecting too much. But then and there I swore that I would never again pay a quarter to shake hands with a great man—and I have kept my word.

But Bishop Simpson! Here he was, giving the last moments of his important visit to us boys, to two raw, green, awkward hobbledehoys who could by no possibility reciprocate his favor, or ever do anything in his interest. To be sure, it was only a moment, for suddenly the great train thundered in, whisked the bishop from the platform, and bore him from our sight. I am sure that we did not at that moment think of Elijah and his chariot of fire, but the likeness was more than imaginary. This was almost the bishop's last journey; we never saw him again, for in a few short weeks he had gone to live with God.

As for these two boys—we went away walking upon air. We had not only been introduced to a bishop, to the one bishop who, of all the race of bishops, it had been the greatest honor to meet, but he had talked with us, talked about serious and worthy matters, talked while others waited, talked as though we were men, as though our presence were significant, and our welfare and our future worth conserving.

We did not then know that this man had been a college professor, a college president, an editor,

a delegate to the Ecumenical Conference and the distinguished orator of that body; we did not know how intimate a friend he had been of President Lincoln, how the Great Emancipator had counseled with and relied upon him, nor that this great bishop had officiated at the funeral of this greatest of Presidents; we only knew that we had met face to face a man, that we had communed with him, and that in some way a "double portion of his spirit" had been offered us. To be ready to fulfill such heaven-sent opportunities of stewardship has all these years been the unuttered prayer of our heart.

4. This Bishop "Officiates Pontifically"

It was late in the evening of a glorious Sunday in summer. The doors of the big resort hotel were closed for the night, and all but a few stragglers among the happy but tired guests had gone to their slumbers. Even now the vocal accompaniment to pleasant dreams could here and there be heard echoing raucously through the thin partitions and the long halls. Far out in front the silver moonbeams were kissing the gently lapping ripples on the face of that fair lake, long since rendered "Beautiful" by the immortal Quayle, and their languorous whisperings were adding soothing music to the concert of the night.

The scribe who writes these lines had, with his courageous wife, spent a strenuous and arduous day, and had sought their well-earned repose.

True, they had been burdened with no specific responsibility, for they were on their vacation, and their hardest struggle had been to attain to that most elusive ideal, "rest." But how can the hard-working preacher rest when there are meetings to attend? Twice that day they had been to the great auditorium to hear the bishop preach, and at eventide they had attended the vesper service on the beach. The remainder of the time they had spent in pleasant converse with friends, in walking among the fragrant Michigan pines and along the water's edge upon the "singing sand," and in eating comfortable meals at the hotel table. Of course they were weary, and legitimately so. This preacher was a "very busy man."

I have often marveled at the enormous credit we preachers are usually ready to give ourselves, and the tides of compassionate sympathy we invite, for performing when we are under no official obligation the very same duties which we expect of the members of our churches, not only now and then, but invariably, fifty-two Sundays in the year, whether at home or abroad.

At peace with God and man, we were silently courting slumber. Perhaps this boon to weary sufferers was slightly delayed, in our case, by the slow, steady, monotonous "creak-uh-creak-uh-creak-uh-creak" of a hammock, swinging on the veranda just outside our window. The hammock, of course, was occupied. Somebody was not too tired to sit up late. We heard the inter-

mittent yet almost continuous hum of voices, low-pitched and mellow. Was it a couple of lovers? Unquestionably. This sweet lake and happy company were nature's irresistible stimuli to such consummate bliss. Even weary preachers could find no heart to blame them, as the billing and cooing of these happy souls were wafted to our ears. What they were saying we could not hear, but that was of no consequence; what lovers say, and say a thousand times over, doesn't matter, only so they say it.

Presently we heard the sound of footsteps—tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, slowly, quietly, heavily approaching. Somebody was out on the veranda, coming toward our window, toward the hammock and the lovers. Nearer and nearer came the footfalls. At last they came to a stop, almost at our window. Evidently, the evening stroller had discovered the hammock and its occupants, and must either give an account of his presence or beat a retreat.

Then a kindly, deliberate, heavy voice broke the silence. "Good evening," it said. "This is a beautiful night. I hope you are having a pleasant time."

"Good evening," replied two timid, youthful voices, in concert. "We were staying out awhile to talk and enjoy the lake and the stars."

Then the gentle, heavy voice was heard again —and the quiet conversation was on.

That voice! There was no mistaking it; none other like it in all the world. It was such a

voice as the aged apostle John must have used when in Ephesus he taught his people: "Little children, love one-another; for love is of God." It was the voice of Bishop Ninde, the preacher on whose inspired words the crowds had hung all day. There was no use in trying not to listen; we could not help it, the conversation went on right before our open window. And there was really no call to raise an alarm, or to interrupt the drama, to save ourselves from eavesdropping, for those who talked knew the environment in which they had placed themselves. And what occasion was there to close our ears, even if we could, to whatever might be said? Surely, the words of a good and wise bishop to two presumably exemplary young people could not be other than edifying.

But we were hardly prepared for the full program of events. We could hear, of course, only occasional snatches of the conversation, and even these fragmentary utterances were in constant competition with our drowsy, half-conscious mental wanderings. We soon discovered that the good bishop was concerning himself with the spiritual welfare of these two lovers. Was the young lady a Christian? Yes, she hoped she was, though not a very satisfied one. Was the young man a Christian? He feared not. Though he had once enjoyed some sort of relation with the church, he felt that he had wandered away and was living disobediently. He did realize, however, that he ought

to come back, and was meaning to do so in the future.

Little by little, with consummate skill, like a wise and good shepherd, this good bishop led the young man on, to a sense of his immediate need and responsibility, to the place where he could fully put his trust in Christ, and to the point of a full committal to God's service.

"Shall we all pray together?" said the bishop.

The creak of the hammock subsided, and we could hear, in subdued accents, the voice of the good man offering up this newly surrendered soul to the Father. Then, evidently under the helpful coaching of the bishop, we heard the young man falteringly place his life in the Saviour's hands. Evidently, too, the young lady was playing a helpful and willing part in all this procedure.

Dense darkness hovered over land and sea, and flooded the pinewoods with its blackness. The gloomy lake lay sullen and silent. The insect world had gone to sleep, and the birds had folded their heads beneath their wings. But in a cluster of wakeful hearts, at that still hour—hearts of young man, maiden, bishop, and eavesdropping preacher and his wife—the divine light of heavenly joy was blazing gloriously, for here was ancient Bethel re-enacted, and God and angels were bending down with love again to look upon a ransomed life.

Then, "Good night," "Good night," and all was over. The measured tread of a weary old

man died away at the far end of the corridor. The quicker step of two light-hearted youth disclosed that each at last was seeking a place of rest. The listening preacher was left to his midnight thoughts. And they were "long, long thoughts." Here was a contrast too evident to be misunderstood. A healthy young pastor, in the vigor of manhood, too much occupied to think of the spiritual needs of strangers who might perchance be waiting, unconsciously, for his coming, and too weary, with having done nothing at all, to exert himself to search out and save the wandering sheep. An aged bishop, laden with "the care of all the churches," pressed down with a multitude of administrative responsibilities, worn with constant travel, exhausted with a day of toilsome service, yet still so full of interest in the welfare of his fellow men that he must needs go out into the midnight to search them out and win them back to God.

And still the bishop's task was not complete. In the morning, as I passed the open door of his room, I heard quiet voices talking earnestly together. Then I heard the bishop calling my own name. I returned and entered the open door.

"I want you to meet my two young friends," he said. "This is Miss —— and this is Mr. ——. They have just rededicated their lives to God. I am going away this morning, and I want you to take care of them. I have told them that you will be here awhile, that they can trust you, that

I have known you a long time, that you have been the beloved pastor of my own family, and that they must let you help them all you can."

That I tried to make good upon the bishop's assurances may be taken for granted. The young man and woman became faithful members of the church. But the chief recipient of all this evangelistic endeavor was the preacher whom the bishop thus appointed to carry on his work so well begun. The stewardship of all one's skill and talents, of all one's love, of all one's prayers, of all one's spiritual ministry, had been so impressed upon my heart that, while memory lasts it can never be effaced.

CHAPTER V

THE FOURTH DIMENSION

The Evolution of a Great Ideal

The average Christian experience is not a single crisis, it is a growth. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." And this is entirely normal. Only living things have experience. Stones and sticks pass through physical changes, but experience is a thing reserved for living beings—men, monads, archangels. And all living things grow. Indeed, growth is an evidence of vitality. When things cease to grow then we know that they have begun to die. Babies grow, and weeds grow, and trees grow.

It might be queried: "Well, how about us? We're adults; we've stopped growing, we've got our growth." I sincerely hope not. Our brain at least should be growing, and our mind expanding, as long as we live. If not, the world had been better off without us. And even our body must keep on growing, not in size, of course, but in fresh material—new muscular tissue, new blood corpuscles, new brain cells. Every seven years, more or less, we learned in ago in our schooldays, the entire body is renewed, and in some parts very frequently. Like a well-driven motor there must be constant

replacements, of old, and worn, and broken parts.

But our religious experience, if normal, will be a far more extensive and marvelous growth than this. It will be as striking as the change from babyhood to boyhood and from boyhood to full maturity. It will be as astounding as the bursting of an acorn into an oak, or the transition of egg to chrysalis, and chrysalis to butterfly. If I have been a Christian disciple for a considerable period, and have in the meantime experienced no change, no startling disclosures of new, and terrifying, and unsettling truth, no expansion of ideals, no overwhelming moral enthusiasms, no discontent with the past, no alluring visions of future spiritual conquests, no new avenues of usefulness, no new meanings to life, I should submit myself to my spiritual adviser for a rigid examination. If I have been a Christian for five years, or forty, and am happy because "the old time religion is good enough for me," I should be frankly told that it isn't good enough for anybody, not because it isn't modern—that's a minor matter—but because it hasn't grown, and is therefore atrophied, withered and sterile. My religion to be of any value must be fresh, vital, and personal, exactly adapted to the requirements of my life at the present hour. Any other religion is merely an "outworn shell," good while alive, but worthless now.

And so there is constant progress in the re-

ligious conceptions and standards of the Christian community. New doctrines are formulated, new aspects of truth flame up, new understandings of the nature and purposes of God emerge, new evaluations of human life are made. The old is not discounted, is not denied, is not abandoned, it is taken for granted, used as a stepping-stone, made a part of the broader foundation upon which the new is built. In this way religion grows better and better, bigger and bigger, wiser and wiser, richer and richer, holier and holier, from age to age. Or it ceases to be religion and becomes ritual.

Within the memory of most of us the motives to Christian faith and conduct have undergone enormous expansion. The average conception of what the Christian life really means has within a generation passed through striking changes, and has also, let us hope, made corresponding progress. This growth and these changes are vitally important to us all. For, as we look back upon them, we discover that they strangely and startlingly parallel the changes which have progressively taken place in our own personal thinking and doubtless in that of the average normal Christian. They are steps in our progress toward the ideals of life which God holds for his children. Little by little we are learning to "think God's thoughts after him."

Our forefathers insisted that, as the minimum foundation for an education, each child should at least be instructed in the "Three R's"—read-

ing, 'riting and 'rithmetic. As steps in the recent history of religious thinking, and doubtless in the personal experience of most of us, I would like to call attention to "Four S's," four stages in Christian growth.

Salvation. The first of these we will call *Salvation.* In the early thought of the church, at least in the thought of our immediate forefathers, and I doubt not in the personal experience of most of us, the chief motive to the religious life was a desire to be "saved," saved from sin and its punishment. Not so much from a horror of sin itself, or because it is hateful to our heavenly Father, or from an intense love of holiness, but to be delivered from the unspeakable consequences of sin and assured of a place "in heaven at last." To escape hell, to get to heaven, this was the burden of faithful prayer and the task of evangelism.

In pursuit of this burning ideal earnest revivals of religion were sought, the voice of a consecrated ministry was lifted up, and great evangelists, powerful in prayer, denunciation and exhortation, gave themselves to the task of warning men of their peril and of plucking them "as brands from the burning." Charles G. Finney, with volcanic pulpit appeals and irresistible intercession, swept multitudes of saints to their knees and penitents to the altar. Dwight L. Moody, employing incomparable powers of persuasion and backed by volumes of sacred song, led multitudes to the valley of decision, while

B. Fay Mills, and J. Wilbur Chapman, and Billy Sunday followed in their train.

It must not be forgotten that in the minds of the ministry in general the meaning and scope of salvation far outran this feature of personal deliverance and reward. Indeed, it has been the special mission of the more prophetic souls in all the centuries to point out the broader and deeper aspects of Christian faith, but for a large proportion of those who sought the better life the ruling motive seems to have been this matter of personal security.

This is, perhaps unconsciously but no less strikingly, revealed by the character of the hymns whose popularity has at one time or another proved them to be genuine echoes of the heart. One of the most highly favored hymns, indeed, one of the grandest in the history of the church.

> "Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in thee,"

is concerned entirely with personal security, breathes no suggestion of serviceability, and betrays no suspicion of any interest beyond that of the suppliant himself. So far as this hymn goes the meaning of the universe is exhausted in the safety of one soul. This in no way suggests, of course, the condemnation of the hymn. No hymn can be required to compass an entire system of faith, and the phase of truth under consideration is nobly set forth. But as illustrative

of an attitude of mind and a stage in spiritual development, it is eloquent.

This tendency is further illustrated in the irresistible drift toward gospel songs of a still lighter, more popular, and more evidently self-centered sort. A generation or two ago a Christian congregation, devoutly zealous of every good work, could sing all through, with the zest of high emotion, the song whose chorus rang—

"Pull for the shore, sailor,
Pull for the shore."

A little farther down the scale could be heard this popular appeal to the self-interest, the fear, and the will power of the "wayward sinner"—

"O, you must be a lover of the Lord,
Or you can't get to heaven when you die."

And, to illustrate the joyful possibilities of a sacred spiritual communion, consider this camp-meeting appeal of a generation past:

"I drink when I'm dry. I drink a supply.
I drink from a fountain that never runs dry.
O Hallelu*jah!* O hallelu*jah!*
O halle-, O halle-, O hallelu*jah!*"

I am not making light of this aspect of faith, though some of its exhibitions were amusing. Indeed, it is too real and too serious to be anything but a matter most weighty in the thought of every one of us. Neither am I holding up to ridicule the ideals of the past. I am simply trying to illustrate their partial and incomplete nature, to suggest that we are still on the way to

the highest and have not yet arrived, and to call attention to the danger that we shall make Peter's classic mistake of wishing to pitch our tent right where we happen to see a vision and to abide there forever. Like the patriarchs of old, we are transients, pilgrims—"we seek a country."

This matter of personal redemption and soul security, however, though only a part of our quest, is no small affair. It is an ideal both immense and sublime. It declares the infinite worth of man. It puts the soul beyond all price. In an age like ours, in which the very existence of an abiding personality is called in question, and the Saviour's challenge, "How much then is a man better than a sheep?" is answered doubtfully and dolefully, it is refreshing to find the great religious leaders of the ages bearing valiant and united testimony to their assurance that the human soul truly is, that it is of inestimable worth, that its peril is incalculable, that it is capable of immortality, and that its Creator is interested, willing, and able to bestow upon it eternal bliss.

To this faith John Bunyan's undying story bears witness, as we watch his struggling Pilgrim speeding from the City of Destruction to the City of God. To this faith John Wesley points us, when he holds out as the "one condition" of church worthiness "a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from our sins." To this faith the ardent pleadings of the

seraphic Whitefield and the terrific warnings of Jonathan Edwards call us. And if further confirmation be required, let one turn back to the solemn admonitions of the apostle Paul and to the uncompromising words, the bitter tears, and the pleading invitations of the Man of Galilee. Surely, the cause that so absorbed the lives of these great souls must be a cause of infinite consequence.

But, having noted this, we must hasten to affirm again that this is not all. The redemption of self is not the whole nor the substance of our faith. This is but the beginning. It is the first step, important, essential, indispensable, but not the whole journey. Let us accept it for what it is, thankful that we have so much, add it to our spiritual treasure, place it as a corner stone in our firm foundation, but admit that we are not yet satisfied, and go on to other and broader achievement.

Sanctity. The second of our "Four S's," the next step in our upward climb, the stone which logically comes next in our spiritual foundation is *Sanctity.* We think we can trace the ideal pretty well through the Scriptures. Jesus prays: "Sanctify them through thy truth"; Paul says to the Corinthians: "But now ye are sanctified"; and for the Thessalonians he prays: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly"; while the writer to "The Hebrews" declares that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." John Wesley conceives of this state of grace as

a distinct psychological and spiritual experience, and speaks of it as "the second blessing." A prominent Baptist evangelist calls it "the higher Christian life." A great bishop speaks of it as "Christian purity." A learned professor applies to it the characterization of Saint John, "perfect love." But however we designate it, there is no doubt that we are thinking of the kind of life of which Paul speaks, a "life hid with Christ in God."

This is a high ideal, worthy of most reverent consideration. Many men, indeed, have questioned whether we are to think of a higher experience in Christian living as coming to us through a distinct and conscious personal experience, though many believe it. Many have doubted if we may hope to enjoy perfect love in this life. Many would shrink from any claim to personal holiness. But whatever our doubts, shrinkings, self-distrusts, or verbal disagreements, we are all united in the knowledge that Jesus' great ideal for his disciples is, "Be ye therefore perfect." With a lower aim than this we dare not be satisfied. To offer to God a confessedly spotted life, except for immediate pardon and cleansing, would be to insult his own holiness and our Saviour's redemptive love.

Wholeness, symmetry, and sanctity of life we must unceasingly hold before ourselves as our Saviour's standard and expectation, and as our own rigid ideal. For how can we call ourselves his followers, or profess even to aim to be "like

him," unless we may hope that through his power we may, we must, in some way or other, be transformed into his own "image and likeness"? Such a conception of Christian character highly exalts human worth and gives to man a truly celestial dignity, while at the same time it exalts the power of God to deal successfully with the awful malevolence of sin and the stubborn blindness of willful men.

But even this high ideal, taken by itself, or pressed to the exclusion or disproportion of other Christian graces, is one-sided, disfiguring, and inadequate. At the best it is only one phase of Christian experience, one stage in a long journey. Moreover, it has its weaknesses and perils, and is, if charged with too great a share of honor, decidedly vulnerable.

A generation ago this ideal of Christian experience was widely and assiduously pressed, in certain sections of the church, and where intemperately urged, unwisely taught, or imperfectly lived, wrought its own undoing. Unscriptural and unreasonable standards, claims impossible of fulfillment, loud professions discounted by unseemly spirit and conduct, often cast discredit upon a great and precious principle of life.

Even at the best this particular phase of Christian living is highly sensitive to infection. It is an experience, or standard, which unavoidably invites introspection; and introspection, carried beyond the point of wholesome self-examination, speedily becomes unhealthy. Un-

covering the planted seed to see if the roots have sprouted may easily impart information at the expense of life. And I doubt not that some of my readers can recall with me the bitter, somber days we spent in looking into our inmost hearts to see if our souls were prospering, when we had far better been "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." The clinical thermometer has its uses, but its place is more often in the hands of the physician than the patient.

And where the result of introspection is not paralyzing, it is likely to result in Pharisaism. Finding my inmost self in satisfactory condition is likely to suggest an unfavorable comparison with my faulty neighbor. And if I soon discover that I, with a few others, am in the right, and a large majority of my neighbors in the wrong, I speedily become spiritually narrow, exclusive, arrogant, and censorious. From this it is but a step to controversy, and dissension, and faction, and theological feuds, religious wars, and unbrotherly incriminations.

And yet an ideal of life so compelling that it took first rank in the system of the devout and scholarly Wesley and has commanded the allegiance of such leaders of the modern church as Daniel Steele, and Andrew Murray, and Randolph S. Foster, and F. B. Meyer, and Charles H. Spurgeon, and a host of others, is not to be rejected or discounted because its heights have proved too dizzy for weak-hearted saints. It is still a great Christian ideal, far in advance of

the mere rudiment of personal salvation. It is now, let us say, a part of our Christian achievement, an article of our faith, a trophy of our experience, a foundation stone to our religious structure. But it does not satisfy, for too largely it ends in self. Let us take it for granted, add it to our treasure, and go on to other and larger achievement.

Service. As the next natural step in our spiritual development I would suggest *Service.* One cannot long be in the Christian life, if he realizes at all what it means to "follow Jesus," without finding the opportunity and the desire to serve. One of the earliest impulses of the disciple is to be useful. He is eager at once to discover just how he can best serve God. But he soon finds that the most effective way in which he can serve God is to serve his fellow men. We are here, he learns, to "help one another."

Indeed, this rapid growth into a spirit of helpfulness is inevitable. One can hardly read the Bible with an understanding heart without absorbing this ideal of service. It is impossible to listen to the parable of the good Samaritan, or to the divine counsels of the Sermon on the Mount, or even to recite the "Second Great Commandment," without discovering that service is a cardinal principle of Christianity. While, to follow the Master around the shores of Galilee, and watch him in his gracious work of preaching, teaching, and healing, is to discover that a large proportion of the divine energies of the

great Founder of our faith was spent in bringing relief and blessing to human life.

It is therefore most natural that every Christian communion should sooner or later give increasing attention to the humanitarian side of its mission. The drift of the Salvation Army from an evangelistic emphasis to social service was no unusual phase of religious evolution—although an emphasis upon the latter would be no justification for neglect of the former—and we can fully enter into the enthusiasm of General Booth's followers in their loyalty to his great watchword, "Others."

Thus it is not strange that the generation just passing should have been characterized by a great advance in the development of social service. Moreover, in this it has but followed the normal course of the religious experience of individuals. Great social movements and endeavors have therefore been the order of the day, and the city rescue missions, the charity organization societies, the social settlements, the neighborhood houses, the mothers' clubs, the Boy and Girl Scout movement, the child labor reform, prohibition, and a score of other such expressions of a sense of social responsibility, have been but the normal outgrowth of a great Christian-social passion. The world of human society has been vastly enriched, in the last fifty years, by these Christlike applications of the "Second Great Commandment."

And yet, in all this business of service, there

is likely, sooner or later, to come a sense of incompleteness, perhaps of bitter disappointment. The question cannot help but arise, unbidden: "Why serve? What is the end of service? Why should I plan and contrive and toil and sacrifice and wear my life away, simply to give some other life a chance to enjoy, perhaps selfishly, ungratefully, and unprofitably, that which I renounced in order to provide it for this other? And to what purpose, anyway, is this perpetual struggle to prolong other lives, to conserve and multiply population, to make the yoke of toil lighter for men that they may have leisure for more hilarious sins and more fruitless pleasure?" And the whole process suddenly palls upon one as an infinite round of barren endeavor. Human nature seems so little inclined to progress or self-help, so prone to ingratitude and stagnation, that to put forth any serious effort to add to human numbers or comfort appears as profitless an investment as that of the proverbial prairie farmer who "plants more corn, to feed more hogs, to get more money, to buy more land, to plant more corn, to feed more hogs," etc.

Dean Swift is said to have declared that

> "The little fleas that do us tease,
> Have lesser fleas to bite 'em;
> And these again have lesser fleas—
> And so, *ad infinitum.*"

And so, it sometimes seems, goes on the dreary round of profitless human existence; one man toils and sacrifices and idealizes to make life

more tolerable and more virtuous for another, while that other thanklessly absorbs the benefits, uses them unworthily, prolongs his existence for selfish ends alone, and helps to augment an unimproved population which goes on doing the same thing over again. Thus, as an unbalanced passion for "salvation," or for "sanctification," may become the ingrowing vice of individuals, so an unfounded and purposeless social passion may degenerate into a vice of society. Wherever social service becomes merely an end in itself; wherever ardent souls, moved by no divine impulse, conscious of no imperishable spiritual worth in human life, exhaust their energies in striving only to make this fleeting life a little more tolerable, humanity is but circling in a whirling maelstrom from which there is no outlet but despair.

When our hopes have sunk to this low level, atheism is as good as anything else, and as potent, and our final conclusion may well be that of Elbert Hubbard's classic inscription on the base of a skull: "What's the use?" If life is but a fleeting show, if character is not of infinite and perennial worth, if souls are not divine, immortal, if virtue has no eternal values, if God, if sin, if forgiveness, if eternity, are but vague ideals, "What *is* the use?" Why struggle further? Why not forget the follies and sorrows of men and adopt the Epicurean slogan, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"?

But, thanks be to God, we are not shut up to

this conclusion. If we are still on the Christian way, God is to us a reality, a living, personal, almighty Friend; One who cares for us constantly, immeasurably, and everlastingly; One who regards with equal solicitude all other human lives, and whose highest commendation is reserved for us when we help one another, not alone compassionately for temporary relief, but, with a love akin to his own love, for their undying welfare. If, now, we have proceeded thus far in our ideals of service, we have taken a long step forward in our Christian experience, we have made a great advance in the evolution of our religious character.

But we cannot rest here. We must keep on. In our personal experience we cannot but feel that bare service is not the end. There must be a closer, warmer, more intimate relationship to God and man than that. And even in our organized church life we seem to have reached the limit of inspiration from the mere ideal of service. But just at this moment, in God's good providence, just in the nick of time, just when the church and our lives needed it most, has come a great discovery. In our ceaseless search for truth, for inspiration to character-expansion, we have stumbled upon an old, old principle, a principle as ancient as the hills, yet new to our lives and new, in any general way, to the church of to-day.

In their search for a suitable rock for the corner stone of Solomon's Temple, the builders are

said to have scoured the country far and wide, but in vain. At the same time a rough and ugly stone lay just outside the door of the Temple, unobserved but for its hugeness and its obstructiveness to the work of the masons. After repeated stumbling over this uncut and unprepossessing stone a workman accidentally discovered in it exactly the quality and proportions requisite for the great corner stone of the Temple, and at last, with triumph and with shoutings, it was laid upon its place. Such a corner stone, in Christian experience and life, the church has found to-day. That corner stone is—

Stewardship. It is new; it is old. It crops out, like a vein of gold, every here and there in the Old Testament, and it runs like an unbroken chain of gold through the New. It holds in moral bounds the characters of patriarch and prophet, and sets for apostle and martyr the compelling motives of self-regardless life. It tempts the church of to-day with no fantastic, untried, and questionable novelty, but offers for the church's deliverance and the individual disciple's guidance and inspiration the key to joyful and successful service. It is not a new doctrine, but the renaissance of that high principle which from the dawn of history has determined ideal relations between man and man, and between man and God. It is a life line thrown out to God's people, in an age of drifting, uncertainty, and peril, and has come to the aid of his Kingdom "for such a time as this."

Elsewhere we shall take notice of the unusual welcome which has been accorded this new-old principle, and of its wide acceptance in the church and among all ranks of Christian leaders. Suffice it here to observe that it seems to fit the needs of the present hour in a measure so gratifying as to appear unquestionably providential, and to offer to perplexed and groping disciples a solution of their most baffling problems. It offers too a warmth and intimacy of spiritual experience for which the age is starving. Surrounded by comforts and luxuries no other age has known, men are more needy of God to-day than ever before, and their sated hearts, sometimes unconsciously, more hungry for his fellowship. And where the unbalanced pursuit of personal "salvation" often resulted in a narrow life of spiritual self-interest, and the untempered lure of "sanctification" begot morbid introspection and an unlovely egotism, and where the bare ideal of unselfish "service" led to arctic heights of loneliness and fruitlessness, "stewardship" comes with the heart-warming assurance of an ideal social relationship between a gracious Father and all his children. Selfishness, egotism, exclusiveness, heartlessness, godlessness are sins which cannot survice in the atmosphere of stewardship.

Stewardship is no occult, fantastic, or impossible ideal. It stands for a personal and confidential relationship between the divine Proprietor and his appointed and trusted represen-

tative. If I am a faithful steward, I am delegated of God to do such work as subserves the interests of his Kingdom and the welfare of his children. I am more than a servant; I am an ambassador, a junior partner, I am "in his stead," doing the divine task he has chosen to leave in my hands rather than in some other, or rather than doing it directly himself. The great center of it all is that I am in a position of trust, and the larger the task, and the more burdensome the stewardship, the greater the honor. This is beautifully illustrated in a recent poem by Dorothy Littlewort:[1]

PRAYER OF A TEACHER

"Father, between thy strong hands thou hast bent
The clay but roughly into shape, and lent
To me the task of smoothing where I may
And fashioning to a gentler form thy clay.
To see some hidden beauty thou hadst planned,
Slowly revealed beneath my laboring hand;
Sometime to help a twisted thing to grow
More straight; this is full recompense, and so
I give thee but the praise that thou wouldst ask . . .
Firm hand and high heart for the further task."

Thus, whether or not I choose it, or accept the commission, I am still his steward. I cannot shirk responsibility by denying him or refusing his appointment. Willing disciple, or unwilling rebel, believer or unbeliever, I am equally his steward; the only choice I can make is whether I shall be a faithful or an unfaithful one.

This exalted character of stewardship is suffi-

[1] Reprinted by permission of *The Commonweal*, New York City.

cient explanation of its prompt acceptability and its rapid spread through the churches. In it men discover an answer to their longing for a more effective and abiding Christian experience and a more just and affectionate relationship to their fellow men. It blends into one great ideal all those high and promising phases of experience which have seemed so hopeful and proved so inadequate. Personal "salvation," in the light of Christian stewardship, at once loses its aspect of narrowness and egotism, and displays itself in its true character. No longer a mere negative, an avenue of escape from penalty, it appears as a great affirmative, something of infinite worth to the divine Father, something of limitless blessing to self and to other men. Saved not "from," but "to"—to a great sonship, a great soul-enlargement, a great purpose, a great service.

"Sanctification," likewise, turns out to be something other than a mere state of harmless self-gratulation, or of arid purity, and becomes a "life unto God," a life entirely *en rapport* with God, in behalf of men. While "Service" has to do not with temporary relief or advancement, but, in behalf of all that is lofty and immortal in man, spans the eternities. As stewards of God, yoked with him in a divine partnership, we serve our fellow men, in accordance with the dictates of his infinite love, for his, and their, and our never-ending profit. Stewardship thus gives new and exalted meaning to "God," "Self,"

"Neighbor," and blends all in a holy and affectionate relationship. Here is salvation for a purpose, sanctification with an end in view, service which brings gracious fruitage to God, self, others. And these are the meanings which God's word originally gave to these exalted concepts, and which a true Christian interpretation always imparts to them, but which, because of men's scant and one-sided views of life, have so often and so generally been obscured. Thankful we should be that they have been brought at last again to their rightful heritage through this present-day revival of stewardship.

Fruitfulness—this is the ultimate end of stewardship. And it is in response to this great ideal and motive that the noblest of men have wrought out their supreme life achievements. It was with an overpowering sense of stewardship that Saint Paul spent his years of deprivation, poverty, travel, and toil, seeking from land to land new opportunities to serve that Master who had called him to his apostleship, and striving "by all means to save some." It was stewardship which drove Martin Luther to his stubborn: "Here I stand; I can no other; God help me," and gave to us, through him, the open Bible. Stewardship urged Wesley for half a century from hamlet to hamlet and house to house, and drove Asbury for a life-time through the wilderness. Stewardship induced Dwight L. Moody to devote his supreme talent for salesmanship to the sole business of dispensing the good tidings

to every land; wooed Fanny Crosby to lay at the feet of Jesus all her talent for poetry and song; wafted Xavier and Morrison to China; Carey to India; Livingstone to Africa; Cox, and Taylor, and Thoburn, and Bashford, and a noble army of apostolic zealots, to their destined fields of sacrificial service; won the hearts of Colgate and Baldwin and Huyler and Kennedy and Rich and Spear, with a goodly group of other merchant princes, to lay their treasures at the feet of the King of kings; and led a great company of godly fathers and mothers, with strong crying and tears, but with devoted self-abandon, to lay upon the altar for Christ's service their sons and daughters, and led those sons and daughters gladly to suffer the loss of all things if only so they might bring to darkened and impoverished men the riches and the light of Christ.

If the faithful disciples of Jesus to-day will open their hearts wide to this ideal of stewardship, their lives will undergo a wondrous transformation, and if the Church of God to-day will accept this principle as its chief working formula, that revolution in its spirit, purpose, program, and productivity for which its anguished leaders long have prayed and striven will speedily find realization.

It is related that when that illustrious Italian painter Donatello had finished his statue of Saint George, the warrior saint, upon the facade of the Church of San Michele in Florence, all the city was moved to come and view the

artist's masterpiece. Before giving it their final approval, however, all waited to see what would be the judgment of the great Michael Angelo. In due time this prince of artists came striding down the avenue, reached the cathedral and paused before it in long and earnest contemplation. There stood the warrior saint, head uplifted, sword in hand, shield on arm, foot outstretched, and every muscle tense with life, as though ready and inspired to step out forthwith to the conquest of the enemies of the Lord. Then, at last, there broke over the great sculptor's face an awakening smile of approval. His eye kindled, his shoulders straightened, and, stretching out his right hand to the warlike statue, he exclaimed: "Now, March!" The Church of Christ to-day stands all equipped for conquest. Learning, truth, genius, history, riches, and before her the world's wide field of opportunity. If through her soul shall once but sweep the thrill of holy stewardship conviction, like the saints and martyrs of old she may go forth conquering and to conquer.

CHAPTER VI

THE ALCHEMY OF GRACE

1. Gold for Brass

I DISTINCTLY remember him still, as I see him through the mists of the years, sitting on the front bench in the little old schoolhouse, a restless, happy-go-lucky, towheaded urchin, dangling his bare feet four inches above the floor and grinning back a smudgy-faced welcome to the "new scholar." He was six and I was five.

"Oh, you'll surely like Joey," they had all told me. "He's the finest little chap. He'll make you a great playfellow." And Joey and I became friends from that hour. Alas that our friendship could not have continued uninterrupted through the years!

Joey was a bundle of live wires, a dynamo of electric energy. First in mischief, first in play, and last in the hearts of his pedagogues. He did not originate all the "wicked devices" which were perpetrated on those old school grounds, as one conscience-smitten memory testifies, but he was responsible for so many that he got credit for practically all of them. He and I and one or two other boys formed a group which never allowed the social life of our little scholastic community to stagnate. If it happened to be wooden daggers, bowie knives, and Quaker pis-

tols with which to harry the dangerous "Indians" of our neighborhood—those younger and less aggressive boys—and the "Dutchmen" from the other side of the district, or devices for shocking and astounding and pestering the girls, we were sure to be prepared.

Joey's talent for veracity left something to be desired. I do not think he was essentially untruthful; perhaps his imagination was overactive. This trait occasionally rendered him an object of suspicion to those who were most responsible for my own proper moral upbringing, and he was not always on the list of popular visitors at our home.

One evening at sunset while we were still small boys I accompanied him a part of the way home from my father's house to his, going with him clear through the little swamp, over the causeway, and as far as the second hill. He told me that on my way back I must be very, very careful not to meet a lizard, as these fierce creatures, of the proportions and fiery temper of crocodiles and the swiftness of barn swallows, infested the little swamp and had a particularly avid appetite for small boys. With bosom frozen with terror I speeded back home, to apprise our imperiled household of the common danger. The myth was promptly exploded and solemn warnings issued against such demoralizing associations.

As I look back upon it, I can see that these suspicions were somewhat superficial and did a real

injustice to Joey. He "stretched the truth," he used "bad words," he neglected his books and wasted his time in play, but he was not essentially evil. He was the victim of a vivid and uncurbed imagination, misdirection, and overflowing vitality. With a generous heart and a bright and ingenious mind, he stood in need of the very encouragements to useful inventiveness and fruitful play which surround the boys of this later and more favored generation. All the talents and all the noble impulses he possessed, and they were many, might have been directed in channels of service and success instead of being left to grow in wild and lawless confusion. It was his misfortune and not his fault that Boy Scouts and modern child-psychology were invented a generation after he needed them.

In our later youth Joey and I quarreled over the same damsel, which matters not at all, as it turned out that she wanted neither of us, nor did we want her; we only wanted to have our own way. But for months we were mortal "enemies," and the formal reconciliation which came later availed us little, as Joey soon afterward moved away with his parents to a distant part of the State. We met only once after this—a few months later—for many, many years. But we did not miss each other, for we had already become estranged in ideals and purposes.

Joey, who had a wonderful memory, the gift of song, a talent for poetry, a ready wit, fine adaptability for social life, and should have been

won to active and successful work in the church, drifted away, lost interest, turned to worldly pleasures and unhelpful companionships, and seemed to be lost to the religious life. While I, silent, plodding, unsociable, unpoetic, and unstimulating, turned my attention and affection more and more toward the church, and soon became deeply engrossed and measurably acceptable in its service. Meanwhile Joey and I were progressing through the years, each in his own way, and each unknown to the other.

But, as the ancient story of Mark the evangelist has shown us, a youth who displays an early inclination to wander may later prove highly "profitable for service," and write his name immortal. Thus it was with Joey. He married before he was nineteen, but it was a providence for which he has many times given thanks. The new wife held him to the narrow trail of common sense and duty. She kept him in school two years, then watched over him while he mastered his chosen calling and found himself safely intrenched in it. But, of course, the early squandered years, which should have been spent in diligent and well-chosen plans and preparations for life's tasks, were now taking their toll, and any calling open to Joey must needs be a humble one, easily acquired and of limited promise.

Joey now began to make the best of himself. He had a keen talent for mechanics, and from babyhood had delighted in seeing "the wheels go

round." He secured a lot of books on steam engineering, which he soon mastered. Then he became a miller. Then, a better job as steam engineer. He was climbing slowly upward, but the climb was steep and long. So runs the story of the years. By and by he became engineer of the high school in the near-by city, then chief of the city system, and later on of the State College plant. He was slowly "redeeming the time."

One day, just before Christmas, some four or five years ago, I received by mail a small but very heavy parcel. What could it be? It came from the city near which my boyhood had been spent. I hurriedly opened it. In it I found a beautifully polished steel hammer, chisel, screw-driver, punch, and other such tools, all neatly marked with my own initials; and from the box and the letter accompanying it I learned that these tools had been carefully made, expressly for me, under Joey's direction and by the students in his Manual Training School. And thereby hangs the very best part of my tale.

Shortly before this Joey had moved to this larger city to become engineer in a high school. Here his ability in manual training, and his talent for leading and instructing boys, had been disclosed, and soon, instead of a job as engineer, he was occupying the position of teacher in the Industrial School. I visited the city and sought him out, we renewed our ancient friendship, drove out in his own car to the home of our boyhood, and he told me the story of the years. He

had found his calling, his place in the world's program. "I believe," he told me, "that in these seven years I have done more good than in all the rest of my life. Here are boys that need help; need to be taught the value of education, of square dealing, and I have had to create in them a desire for these things. I have held myself up as a 'horrible example,' telling them the story of my wasted years and my lowly achievement, and contrasted it all with the faithful labors and high success of you and your brother. I have got them interested, and I am proud of the results. Nearly all the boys are making good. But if I could know that just one boy in all the lot had truly learned from me the meaning of life, I should be amply rewarded." Here is a man who has found, and discharged, the Stewardship of the Second Chance.

Among my earliest recollections is another boyhood friend, whom I loved dearly, played with furiously, and for convenience will call Jim. This boy had more hilarious play in him than any other boy I knew; his laugh came from away down in the lowest stratum of his being and reverberated to every quarter of the globe; and his good-nature and optimism were unquenchable. When we "played soldier," marching in single file with our brothers beneath a striped-towel flag, beating a tin pan drum and whistling the "March of the Six Hundred Thousand," Jim could not be captain, as I was older and arrogated that dignity to myself, but he could tramp,

tramp, tramp, and shoulder his wooden musket, as snappily and as cheerfully as though he had been all Grant's soldiers and officers rolled in one.

Jim was a good scout, if there ever was one, and made life as jaunty and care-free as though eternities were on the bargain counter. I can see him still, sitting serenely on the grassy, wet bank of Rush Creek, dangling his bare feet over the water, singing with bassoon tones at the top of his voice, and watching with eager eye the cork floater on his fish-line, hoping to pull in an enormous sunfish or horned dace—five inches long—while his serious little brother, with pained expression of countenance, kept begging, "Jim, if you don't quit yelling, you'll scare all the fish away."

There is nothing good that I would not be delighted to say about Jim, but it would scarcely be consonant with truth to say that he loved to study. Stories he surely did love, if his mother would do the reading, but for 'riting and 'rithmetic he had no yearning. His study of English, he once declared, was limited to the title on the outside cover of his first book. At thirteen years of age he left school to work on a farm, earning the munificent salary of eight dollars a month. Education could go hang; he would rather follow the plow, harness the horses, and listen to the meadowlarks. And then on Saturday nights he could go to town, and at the country parties he could dance till daylight.

At a far earlier age than the accepted standard set by the "first families," Jim fell in love and into matrimony. Only a few years passed before he had a goodly circle of "olive plants round about his table." Now, at last, life began to take on a more serious aspect. Here were cute little mouths to feed, and bodies to cover, and feet to shoe; and school, which had been a joke to Jim, when it was not a drudgery, took on the aspect of a relentless slave-driver, when three or four precious little urchins must be supplied with a constant stream of books and tablets and pens and pencils and erasers and sweaters and balls and bats and mitts and all the rest.

To Jim's credit let it be recorded that he braced up to his responsibilities like a man. He never whined, nor shirked, nor bewailed his luck. He had neither time, nor inclination, to wait for regrets over wasted school years. He cheerfully tackled anything that promised honest labor, and a living for his loyal, plucky young wife and happy children. But in these modern days, without education or special training one's chances for desirable occupation, or for a life of family comfort and social advantage, are painfully limited.

Jim tried one thing after another, did his work cheerfully and well, earned the good will of his employers and made some progress. But it was an uphill climb. Hard times came on, men were thrown out of work, wages were low, jobs uncertain, and the time came when my boy-

hood friend began to wear a sober face and carry an anxious heart. And when things begin to run downhill they go fast. Sickness in the family was added to his burdens, and Jim stood at last face to face with despair.

"Standing on the street corner late one evening," Jim told me long afterward, "I was approached by a friend who said, 'Jim, how'd you like to take a correspondence course?' I was grabbing for last straws in those days. This was the last one, and I grabbed it. That was the turning point in my life for better things, a better home, and higher ideals." The next morning he enrolled, as a student of engineering, in an International Correspondence School, secured a little job at eight dollars a week to occupy his daytime moments, and burned the midnight oil for eleven months. Here was this happy-go-lucky lad, who hated English, 'rithmetic, drawing, and everything but play, working by day for his family's bread, and hovering by night over his figures, rules, drafting instruments, angles, circles, cosines and logarithms, getting a final credit, on his first course, of ninety-seven per cent, and, before he was through, carrying off prizes, and responding to the invitation of his school, a thousand miles away, to come to headquarters, at their expense, to present himself as a special success exhibit.

Jim had found himself, and deep in his heart was the solemn resolution never to get lost again. He soon had a good position, took up an ad-

vanced course, finished it, and paid for all his courses, as he went along, by various extra exertions. He went on from one good opportunity to another, bettering himself at every step, soon had a fine home of his own, had taken up helpful forms of volunteer service in community and church, introduced his family to comfortable and neighborly conditions of living, and provided for his children's educational, musical and artistic development. He is now an honored and trusted citizen, connected with one of the largest coal companies in his adopted State, still studious, ambitious, and eager for yet greater success and service.

As memory recalls the story of these two boys I find it quite impossible to charge them with all the blame for their youthful follies, faults, and failures. I should like to blame "Society," if I could, for not adapting its program of opportunity to their peculiar temperaments and needs. And yet Society ever was, and still is, but groping its way, and its ignorance and stupidity was but little removed from theirs. Perhaps we should blame no one. But, with the image of these and countless other boys before us, may we not make holy resolve ever so to live that no life shall miss its opportunity through our neglect?

In my boyhood I was led to believe that Opportunity comes only once in a lifetime, and, once refused, is gone forever. To-day I know that God's grace accepts no such philosophy, but

that, to every man who is willing to discharge this Stewardship of the Second Chance, God will yet give the power to make good, if not in the largest measure, at least in a measure worthy of immortal merit.

2. Spiritual Metamorphosis

In my years of pastoral service I have known a good many janitors, all different. One used to take his seat in the middle of the auditorium, where it was impossible to get out without disturbing the congregation, become absorbed in the service, perhaps nod a bit, and let the heating plant and the ventilation take care of themselves. One janitor got mad and "sassed" the Aid Society whenever the ladies asked for special favors. One despised the boys and girls of the Junior Society, and drove the children out of the church. One objected to everything, however reasonable; another objected to nothing, however offensive. One did too little, but none ever did too much.

But they were good men, all of them, and two, in particular, I remember with reverence, for I have often said: "You can get a competent preacher with very little trouble, but for an ideal janitor you must look long and far." One of these men had a dash of color. He had formerly been a Pullman porter, but, having grown older he desired to retire from the road and exercise his talents "on land." He had not been ten days in charge of his task before the whole

city could see the difference. His skill in "breshin' down" passengers, acquired through years of experience, did not forsake him in his new job, but was registered in every cushion, carpet, rug, drapery, chandelier and hymnal. The church was transformed into a palace of cleanliness, and the windows were as transparent as cathedral glass could be.

The other man was equally thorough, and in addition was the pastor's special guardian. He had been for years in charge of the great church building. The study, where I prepared my sermons, was directly beneath the great organ, and often the uncontrolled musical passion of the organist, or of some privileged student, would go rolling up through the lofty arches and come thundering back through the walls and into my study. Almost invariably the old janitor would appear at the door asking: "Does that organ disturb you? They've no business practicing on that organ when you're in the study."

"Oh, no," I would reply. "I hope my education has given me sufficient discipline to ignore a little noise."

"Yes, but they shouldn't disturb you. Our pastor has a big load to carry here, and we must give him all the protection we can. If you say so I'll drive 'em away."

Thus did these good men discharge the stewardship of their trust.

But here is the story of a janitor who fulfilled his stewardship in a new and glorious way:

In 1917 Robert B. became sexton of a certain church in an Eastern capital city. Being a member of the church he took a lively interest in the welfare of the building and in the various affairs of the congregation. His spiritual activities, however, were not extensive or enthusiastic. Prayer meeting knew him only for the care he gave the church; testimony, song, and thanksgiving were all but unknown. In addition, he had a most unfortunate habit, no longer in repute among good Americans, except those who are prosperous enough to wink at their country's laws, afford membership in rich men's clubs, and purchase costly silver hip-flasks for Christmas. Frequently Robert took a "wee drap too much" —a weakness which greatly humiliated him, caused unhappiness in his home, and became the source of many a sadly broken resolution.

The pastor, a resourceful, big-hearted, sociable man, had his office in the church tower, and the relation between him and his sexton soon became intimate and enjoyable. While this sexton was in his first year of service the church had its first Stewardship Campaign. The sexton listened to the sermons, read the literature, and talked with his pastor about the new subject of "tithing-stewardship," but said he was too poor to undertake it. He could barely pay his rent, support himself and wife, and pay his twenty-five cents a week to the church. For two years the pastor sought to encourage him to make this venture of faith. He tried every argument, every induce-

ment, every promise, every example, but in vain. The sexton dared not take the chance.

One morning in the office the matter came up again, and the pastor said to his sexton: "You enroll as a tithing-steward for one year, and if, at the end of the year, you are not perfectly satisfied that you are as well or better off, I will pay you back all your money except the thirteen dollars you are now contributing."

"I will talk it over with my wife," he replied, "and let you know in the morning."

"I told my wife last night what you offered me in regard to tithing," were his first words the next morning, "and I couldn't get a word out of her; but at four o'clock this morning she woke me and said: 'Robert, I have been thinking all night of the offer the pastor made you yesterday, and I have decided that, if you will trust the Lord instead of the preacher, to see you through, I will go into this thing with you for life.' Pastor, where are the enrollment cards?" The pastor produced the cards, the sexton signed them, and that day he opened an account with God.

At the beginning of this venture the sexton was earning a salary, as janitor, of $50 a month. In addition to this he was permitted to earn what he could by accepting outside employment, whenever he could get it without interfering with his duties as janitor. Such odd jobs as he was able to get, however, were so few and far between that they amounted to practically nothing. So that his salary of $600 a year, out of

which he must pay $132 house rent, was virtually the entire support of himself and wife. After he began his tithing experiment the pastor kept his books for him. The first month after Robert's great decision his income increased from $50 to $68, the next month to $72, the next to $79, the next to $85, and the next to $102.67. At the end of the year his income of $600 had grown to $1,146—almost double—and his contributions to the church and its benevolences had increased from $13 a year to $115.50. But this was not the end of his good fortune. In fifteen months his salary was twice voluntarily raised by the board of trustees.

But greater still was the moral and spiritual transformation. Within a month after his enrollment as a tithing-steward Robert's testimony had changed to the note of victory. Silence gave place to testimony, prayer and praise were his regular contribution at the midweek service, and his old habit of indulgence in intoxicants had vanished forever. If he had been a Christian before, he was surely now a different sort of Christian; and his power and influence in the church, and the esteem in which he was held throughout the community, were so marked as to be the frequent subject of discussion.

Two years after this janitor friend opened his era of trust in God for sufficiency the great test came. He was stricken down with a long, tedious, painful illness, which proved to be cancer of the liver. Little hope of getting well, sub-

stantial certainty of months and months of lingering agony, enormous expense, no work, no income. What could he do? Here was the crisis which he had vaguely foreseen when he feared to venture on such unusual giving—old age, illness, a wife to support, and money gone. *"Is God dead?"* indignantly protested Sojourner Truth to Frederick Douglass, one day long ago, in an hour when the great reformer was hopelessly despondent.

God was not dead. He had remembered his poor old trusting janitor just as faithfully as he had remembered faithful Abraham, three thousand years before. He who had said to his seraphic prophet: "I will never leave thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee," had said it equally to humble Robert B. No miraculous ravens "brought bread and flesh in the morning," no barrel of meal automatically kept its level through the trying months; but from somewhere, from unusual sources, came his support. Individual friends gave him presents. The trustees came to see him, and said: "Just keep cheerful and get well; your job will be waiting for you; and we'll pay your salary till you come back." Only two weeks before he died he said to his pastor, "I never have been so prosperous in all my life as I have been since I couldn't work." And through all these months he never forgot to contribute his tenth.

If, now, some questioning friend should object: "But all this prosperity was natural;

there is no miracle or mystery about it; this sexton had mended his ways and invited confidence and success; people knew of his generosity and his painful illness, and perhaps his pastor stimulated a special interest in him; tithing did not increase his prosperity, and it would be unfortunate and morally dangerous to have it so understood"; I should answer: "Granted! So far as I am concerned, I grant it all. But the willingness and the purpose to tithe, when he had come to look upon it as a duty, produced a new fitness in the man to receive success, a new impulse to self-control, to fruitful exertion, to cheerfulness, to trust in God, to gratitude for life, opportunity and blessings, and made it possible for God wisely to provide the most natural channels through which to distribute his favors. Any man, let us say, thus working together with God, could have done the same. Tithing wrought no material miracle; it simply marked a moral miracle, and wrought a spiritual transformation which permitted all these blessings to follow in due and natural order.

Devout men carried Robert to his burial. So great was the multitude who desired to attend the service that the funeral could not be held in the home, but was held from the church he had loved and served so faithfully. Three ministers conducted the service, six prominent business men acted as pall-bearers, and men whose transactions run into the millions of dollars left their offices that day to pay their last respects to the

"tithing sexton." "Often he has put us to shame," they said, "by his generosity and devotion." And the whole church mourned. To this day his memory is a blessed heritage, and an inspiration to a fearless trust in God.

3. A Social Solvent

Somebody has told the story of a courageous bird that built her nest in the crater of a volcano —and got away with it. But I have visited a church which was built in the crater of a physical, moral, and social volcano, and the church not only flourishes but has quenched the fiercest of the volcanic fires. I said, "a physical volcano," but I should not like to be held to a strict literal accountability on that point. The pastor had told me that he lived in the hottest city in the United States, and also the coldest; and the emphasis with which he said it had given me visions of an August so hot that the very sand melted by the roadside, and a January so cold that people sat on the ice to get warm. This proved to be an exaggeration, but not much.

The first time I entered this little city I was sure I could feel the heat of internal fires. It was late summer, and this was almost up to the Canadian boundary line, but the very air shimmered and trembled with the torrid temperature. For several miles the train had been running along at the base of a high vertical cliff of grayish-brown clay or soft rock, which looked to me suspiciously like volcanic deposit. A little river,

steaming in the noonday heat, flowed through the level valley and provided a ribbon of verdure where all else was stark and bleak as Sahara. Surely we were traversing the monotonous and almost boundless floor of the crater of an ancient and extinct volcano. But the city itself, when we at last arrived, was a glad surprise. Here were substantial and well-kept modern buildings, wide, clean streets, good sidewalks, ample shade trees, attractive shops and offices, and the people, in spite of the terrific heat, apparently alert and wearing the confident aspect of "business as usual."

A short stroll through the residential district soon brought us to the church we sought. Small, but well built, attractive, substantial, and apparently suited to its purpose, it impressed us that there, on the morrow, would be a quiet and wholesome place where one could turn aside for a sweet, old-fashioned Sabbath of rest and worship and "invite his soul." This was a church, we discovered, which had been organized and built, and fathered, and loved by the revered and irrepressible "Brother Van," the famous Doctor Van Orsdel, for fifty years the apostle and missionary of the great Northwest, and whose honored name this church now bears as a memorial.

This church, though small in physical measurements, is anything but small in history, character, achievement and purpose. It got its foothold here when the city was a little frontier

trading point, "wild and woolly," a rendezvous for cowboys, cattle rustlers, horse thieves, gamblers, two-gun men, and evil women. Its saloons, brothels, and gambling hells ran wide open, day and night. Boisterous songs, profane revelings, brawls, robberies, and murders were so frequent that they attracted far less attention than did the occasional attempt to hold a religious service. Preachers were not wanted here. Religion was not in demand. Like some official boards, the citizens had "always done it this way," and no change was conceivable.

Into this Mephistophelian crater the pioneer preachers came. Their welcome was not noticeably hilarious. The keys of the city were not handed over to them. No well-furnished parsonage, with larder stocked with great surprise-parties of choice provisions, awaited them. They just came and started in. Nobody to help, few to encourage, everybody to deride, dishearten, oppose, or criticize. The sulphurous fumes of social chaos oozed up all about them. But they were used to it—or soon would be.

This town was little, if any, worse than other frontier towns, and while it was full of sin and shame and riotous roughness, it was full of brave and hardy men who had given up the comforts of settled society and dared the privations and terrors of the wilderness, perhaps for loved ones' sakes, perhaps to try their luck once more, perhaps driven out from the haunts of law-abiding men, possibly from pure over-plus of vitality

and love of adventure. Anyway, they were here, and they had souls, souls as priceless and immortal as any for whom Christ died, and that was enough for the pioneer preacher. Ah, how well did those brave itinerants fulfill their stewardship of souls!

"There shall be life whithersoever the river cometh." It takes but a few years, under the genial smile of irrigation, to transform a desert into a paradise, and equally swift are the revolutions wrought by the gospel of Jesus. This once boisterous frontier town is now a flourishing, prosperous, moral, cultured, law-abiding, Christian city. And the metamorphosis has been brought about by the word of God and the power of holy living. And, like the weather-beaten trees on the edge of the forest, and the timber-line dwarfs of the mountains, the moral fiber of those disciples who have grown up under conditions of strife and struggle and sacrifice is tough and sin-resistant. The men and women, and youth of the frontier churches know well the pit of death from which they were digged, the peril of sin, the devices of the adversary, and the joys and triumphs of grace. They know whom and what they have believed and what their faith has cost them. They are not better than other good people, but they are determined to hold fast that which they have won.

But this particular church is distinguished not for mere holding on. Others have faithfully done that much. The outstanding characteristic

of this church is moral and spiritual aggressiveness. It has not been satisfied to have a place in the community; it must have a large place. It is not willing simply to do something; it must do a great deal. Not to win the game, but to win everything. Social reconstruction, educational advancement, moral reform, temperance, law enforcement, a sober and decent citizenship, have been just as truly a part of its program as the planting and cultivation of the spiritual life. Fortunately, for its people and its future it has emphasized neither at the expense of the other.

In works of practical philanthropy this church has been a shining example through all the vast regions of the developing Northwest. A few years ago the need of increased hospital accommodations for all this wide territory became manifest. Such enterprises can safely be undertaken only where large wealth or large populations are at hand to foster and sustain. Initial cost and current support are so great as to be possible in small communities and sparsely settled regions only at the price of risk, generosity, and sacrifice. Nothing daunted, this courageous company set about the task of building and equipping a hospital which should be available for the service and relief of all who might apply. A prolonged drought of seven years, repeated crop failure, general insolvency, four-fifths of the banks of the country having closed their doors, and widespread misfortune forbade the help they had hoped for and had been

promised by other cities and churches, and at the same time reduced their own resources, yet, though deeply in debt, and paying ten per cent interest, with their stubborn optimism that their "skies are always blue," they only dug themselves in the deeper, shouldered more burdens, assumed more debts, made more sacrifices, and at last brought their enterprise to a successful consummation.

How did they do it? They have learned the indispensable lesson of the stewardship of their possessions. Eight years ago a faithful pastor, backed up by a devout and energetic layman, a noted physician and surgeon, whose wife had taught him to tithe when their income was barely sufficient to keep themselves and their children from hunger, made tithing-stewardship the program of this struggling church. For years this great surgeon and his wife, now grown to opulence and success, have studied, believed, and practiced the theory that the money with which God intrusted them was put in their keeping, not only to enjoy but to use reverently for the help of men and the promotion of his kingdom, and with this glorious principle they have reverently inoculated the entire church. Not one of the disciples in the church of the apostles in Jerusalem said "that aught of the things that he possessed was his own"; they were held for the benefit of all the brotherhood. And in some such fashion have these frontier disciples conceived their privilege and responsibility.

They are "tithing Christians." Not tithing Jews—with the profoundest respect for that ancient people. Not tithing in any superstitious reverence for a formal law, but tithing in generous recognition of a manifestly divine and workable plan for Kingdom support and progress. And it is in wide adherence to this principle that this handful of faithful Christian men and women have cheerfully and gladly borne for years financial burdens that would have appalled and discouraged multitudes of men and churches where this joyful lesson has not been learned.

In this ardent faith the people of this church have been admirably captained by their pastor. As a doughty champion of stewardship principles he knows no superior, while his church is excelled by no other in the patient and successful practice of the same. Some months ago the pastor arranged for his church a complete program of systematic stewardship study, covering four weeks of the late winter season. The congregation was divided into several groups, each group having its own leader and textbooks, and studying the subject of Christian stewardship in its broad outlines and practical applications, according to the ages and requirements of the members of the respective groups. The pastor himself was made leader of the central adult group, and inspiring genius of the whole. At the close of this period, which came at Eastertide, a great public demonstration was held, a holy convocation, in which the principles of stewardship

were presented, the joys of stewardship illustrated, and the power of stewardship to work miracles of Kingdom promotion made manifest to all beholders. The church was filled to overflowing, great offerings of money were laid upon the altar, scores of young lives dedicated to the service of Christ, many united with the church, and the glory and gladness and presence of God were evident to every heart.

At the time the study program was inaugurated the pastor threw out a challenge to faith which was widely accepted by his people. He proposed that all who were willing to do so should treasure up, for these weeks, the tenth of their income and bring it, as a special gift for the King, on Easter morning. When the offerings of the day were received it was found that those who had entered upon this plan had provided for this special gift more than $1,600. In order to discover the surplus of this offering over the ordinary giving of this group, the amount of the weekly offerings, some $300, was deducted, showing a net special gift of at least $1,300 from this already sacrificial church. In four years the World Service giving of this church has *increased four-fold,* and the Sunday school, with a budget of $1,000, gives $500 to World Service.

What, now, is the explanation—if we may hope to find it—of the unusual success and stability of the stewardship principle in this extraordinary church and pastor? To my mind the answer is in this: that they have made of

stewardship a great life-maxim, applicable to all phases of human experience, rather than a mere device for securing material resources for religious purposes, noble and essential as this alone may be. They recognize, as all practical people must do, that stewardship has primarily and essentially to do with a man's possessions, but they also see that, unless this principle is sufficiently broad and profound to encompass the whole of life, both individual and social, it is manifestly too small to be trusted to solve the highly perplexing problems of the Kingdom.

This pastor and his loyal people evidently recognize that Christian stewardship thoroughly understood, in its broadest and most comprehensive sense, is the principle by means of which men are ultimately to solve the deep and pressing problems which to-day stagger humanity. Great social chasms, great economic difficulties, great national perplexities, great international misunderstandings, great racial antagonisms—something must be done about all these before "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth" can ever be a universal reality. To-day class plots against class, industry is rent with strife, capital and labor distrust each other, nations look askance at one another, white despises black and black fears white, Caucasian and Mongolian, German and French, Austrian and Italian, English and Irish—all these and countless other diverse groups suggest the yawning chasms of conflicting interest that separate

between man and man. What can bridge these chasms? What can ever solve these age-old difficulties?

Christian stewardship can solve these problems —every one! This, no doubt, is a large claim, and there are few data from experience which can be used as proof. But let us suppose that this larger stewardship were given a fair trial. Suppose that every man on earth should come to the definite conviction, as the entire race is ultimately bound to do, that he is in the fullest sense a steward of God, with respect to everything he has—talents, time, influence, conduct, affections, power, property—and a brother and fellow steward with every other man. And suppose that he fully accepts and lives that stewardship. Suppose that every employer, every laborer, every capitalist, congressman, diplomat, king, president, voter, citizen, Negro, Yankee, Jap, Jew, pagan, should recognize absolutely, and acknowledge, and henceforth live his stewardship to God in behalf of his fellow man—how long would it take to banish crime and shame and lust and greed and war from the face of all the earth, and to usher in the kingdom of God?

And then I think, though I do not know, that this congregation has learned the sweetness and the joy of giving through a realization of the sacredness not only of what its members give but of what they keep and use. Apparently they have not been led astray by what I should like to call the Fallacy of Divisibility, the heresy that

some good things are profane just because others are sacred, that six days are secular and one holy, that one-tenth is God's while nine-tenths belong to anybody who can get them. They have discovered, I suspect, that when they look upon all their time as God's, all their talents as God's, all their money as God's, it is more blessed to use what they use, and more joyous to give what they give, than ever it could be if they were keeping all for themselves, or were bargaining with God as to either their share or his. They have found that the richest stewardship of all is the Stewardship of All of Life.

CHAPTER VII

CELESTIAL RECKONING

1. God's Time Schedule

God is never taken by surprise. He is always up to date. Knowing what is coming and having, in his infinite wisdom, long ago provided for it, he is ready for every emergency in his moral realm. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son," and at the most appropriate season, right "in the nick of time," God arranges everything that seems wise to him to arrange. And, as might be expected, God has a message for every age. Upon each generation, according to its peculiar need and stage of development, is shed some added light, in which it may more wisely and safely walk.

Back in the fog and twilight of civilization's dawn, while the race of men was still groping in pagan uncertainty, came this light upon the pathway of a great and good man, "the tallest character in all antiquity," and Abraham, venturing into uncharted wildernesses, cutting loose from all that had made life stable and secure, learned for all men and for all time the fundamental lesson of "faith," without which it is impossible to please God, or even to live at all.

In due course, as the centuries strode on, followed the Messianic message of Isaiah, the social

gospel of Amos, John's call to "repent," Paul's invitation to Christian "liberty," Augustine's "sovereignty of God," Luther's revival of "faith," Wesley's "witness of the Spirit," William Booth's invitation to "service," and all the other great messages which, one by one, have led the wandering Christian brotherhood down the winding pathway of the centuries. Each of these messages has come when the world most needed it; each has been added to the wealth of the world's spiritual equipment, and to each, in its measure, do we owe the growing completeness and symmetry of our faith.

And now, it seems, we need another message, a new and special message, adapted to the peculiar requirements of our age and time. And, strangely, just at the moment of our greatest need and most frantic groping, that new message has come. The message for our day is "Christian Stewardship."

I have called it a "new" message. It is not new; it is old. "Before Abraham was" this message had been heard. As far back as history goes it tells us that men of all climes and races, recognizing the creative power of Something Divine and their indebtedness to the mysterious bounties of nature, were never without some vague sense of gratitude, obligation, accountability to some higher power. Here, then, were at least the germs of stewardship. And with the written Bible it comes to us in no uncertain terms, bursting out into full flower in the teach-

ings of Jesus and his apostles. No, the message of stewardship is old, venerable, tested by the centuries, and found faultless by sage and seer. But it is one thing to be known and acknowledged by the wise and discerning, and quite another to be universally accepted and obeyed.

And so, stewardship is to us a new gospel, not because it has now for the first time been preached, but because for the first time we have listened to it. The clock of truth has been striking regularly, but we have just aroused from our reverie and heard it. And this immediate generation has awakened to stewardship because we specially need it. We are in a condition in which, if we do not have it, and understand and apply it, we are submerged, overwhelmed, morally annihilated. For we are to-day surfeited with opportunity, bloated with prosperity, dyspeptic with the comforts of life, inundated with new knowledge and new revelations of truth.

Never before in history has there lived a generation so qualified to understand and appreciate the principle of stewardship as our own. For to-day we have more to be stewards of, more for which to render account, than the world before has ever known. Never was knowledge so universal, never has science contributed such revelations of mystery, never has invention placed in the hands of men such devices for achievement and enjoyment. It is doubtful if our individual wisdom is greater than that of

our fathers. Our talents are not superior to theirs. Our thoroughness and perseverance may be even less. But to-day knowledge is fluid, it is a common possession, it is within the reach of all. There is a great democracy of intelligence; we have pooled our wisdom. What one man knows to-day all may know. Scientists are scouring the earth in search of knowledge, philosophers have put the invisible and the intangible upon the rack and are prying out their secrets, the printing press is blazoning discovery to the world, the aviator is sweeping like an apocalyptic angel through the heavens, the telephone has bridged the ocean, and the radio whispers and sings and spills its confidences from pole to pole. Such universality of knowledge renders our age unique, and puts upon those who are living to-day responsibilities no other age has ever faced.

And when it comes to material comforts we overshadow the past as noonday surpasses midnight. When my father was a boy American orators were already boasting of the superior wealth and promise of the United States. Since that day the tiniest fraction of the world's time has elapsed, and yet we are now the comfortable possessors of ten dollars each where my father and his contemporaries had one—ten times as much per capita to carry, to use, to spend, to enjoy.

And there are four times as many of us—forty times the total wealth to-day that the country

could boast in the middle of the nineteenth century. Statisticians tell us that, in round numbers, we constitute but six per cent of the population of the globe, yet we consume one third of the world's goods, own a half of its wealth, handle a half of its gold, and manage a half of its finance. And our wealth seems to be increasing by leaps and bounds. To the achievements and acquisitions of science, invention, and productive enterprise there seem to be no limits—the end is not even in sight.

When we compare the primitive comforts of our forefathers with our own, their lack of material provision for convenience, ease, luxury and pleasure, their crude, slow, uncomfortable, unscientific ways of living, their tortures of toil, heat, cold, travel, sickness, poverty, we wonder how they consented to live at all. Why, the kings and emperors of the past would have sold all their possessions to gain what the commonest people enjoy to-day, and the aristocracy of yesterday was poor compared to us. And when we compare our favored lot with that of less prosperous peoples and more backward races, we wonder how it happens that a wise Providence has chosen us as the recipients of such unparalleled bounty. But of one thing we can have no question: such unexampled favor puts us under obligations of gratitude, of unselfish service, and of stewardship to God in behalf of men, in a measure that no people have ever borne before in the world's history. Unless under

such conditions we begin to acknowledge and discharge our stewardship our moral obtuseness is hopeless and our spiritual doom is sealed. Never in the world's long history has a message been more timely than God's message of stewardship to the world this hour.

Stewardship is no doubt the most comprehensive religious conception now before the Christian world. When its special promotion was more generally undertaken, less than a decade ago, it was thought of as a very worthy phase of spiritual idealism, and somewhat promising as a practical means of increasing benevolent giving, but its real magnitude and potency were hardly conceived. To-day we recognize that its possibilities have barely been surmised. For its gigantic proportions are realized only when we consider the wide sweep of its dominion. It covers the whole life of man, it embraces all he is and all he calls his own. His possessions, unquestionably, and all their acquisition, use, and distribution, but, more to the point, himself—physical energy, mental life, talents, emotions, will, education, influence, devotion, spiritual powers and privileges, loved ones—all are trusts reposed in the individual by the providence of God, and all are solemnly to be accounted for.

Stewardship thus indicates the enormous trust which God reposes in us as his representatives—"No longer servants, but friends," partners, coworkers, ambassadors. A friend of my college days has attained great renown as a diplomat.

Not long ago he seems to have been commissioned by the President who appointed him as special Minister to Japan to mingle with the Japanese people, and show them that we are a friendly nation. He went, and so skillful was his work that in a few months he was back in America, and all was peace. Scarcely had he returned when a similar situation developed in Mexico, and the same process was repeated, with the same happy result. What, then, was my friend? A steward of Uncle Sam, trusted to do his work, to act in his stead, to promote his welfare, but using the steward's own wisdom, experience, initiative, and energy to promote the interests of him who made him steward. And I, even I, am likewise a steward of God, bearing similar credentials, prerogatives and dignities. It is indeed the biggest feature of my life—I no longer merely trust God; God trusts me, and honors me with his most important business.

2. Scanning the Sky

No wonder, now, that the Lord's ministers and seers have lifted up their eyes and discovered the promise and potency of this great principle of stewardship. The leaders of all denominations of Christians have paused to note its achievements and worth. Practically every communion has made large provision for suitable leadership, literature, and organization in its promotion. Results of the awakening to its claims and possibilities are visible from end to end of the

country, while happy pastors and laymen, joyful over victories wrought in its name and by its faith, bear testimony, in increasing volume, to its spiritual benefits and material practicability. The exultant correspondence which flows into the offices of the executive leaders of the stewardship movement, at the various denominational headquarters, is ocular demonstration of the success of this principle among the churches of Christ throughout the land.

Responsible church leaders whose opportunities for wide observation are greatest are among the most zealous advocates of the stewardship principle. Every great bishop of the church with whom I have counseled is ardent, outspoken and unqualified in its commendation. Religious editors are practically a unit in its promotion, while the church's chief educators, college presidents and professors accept it as a fundamental principle in religious education. A letter from one of the most experienced and highly esteemed college presidents recently contained substantially this statement: "So thoroughly convinced have I become of the exceeding great importance of this principle that I have included our church's authorized textbook on the subject in our college curriculum, and had it placed in the college library, where every student may have access to its important teachings." From a dozen other college and theological seminary presidents have come similar messages.

Entering a religious conference in the far Northwest, some months ago, a district superintendent grasped my hand and greeted me thus: "God bless you! We're glad you're here. We've been waiting for your message. For five years now, in this territory, we have suffered from drought, and crop failures, and bank failures, and some of our churches are on the verge of bankruptcy and collapse, but wherever stewardship has been preached and practiced we are solvent and prosperous. Give us more of it; spread it all over the State, all over the Northwest, for there is blessing in it."

In this spirit of commendation the more alert pastors of churches, great and small, are a practical unit. From the pastor of one of the largest and most flourishing churches of the Middle West came to our office recently the following message: "We have just finished our 'Church Training Night' period, in which the church has gathered together weekly, on Wednesday nights, for the study of several of the more important religious subjects. One of our principal themes has been 'Christian Stewardship.' In this subject we have had running simultaneously *eight classes of adult men,* using your authorized textbook, and led by some of the most influential business and professional men of the city. It has been a period of great profit and enjoyment." Since that letter came I have learned that, including men and women, there were enrolled *fourteen* stewardship study classes. Need it

cause any surprise, now, that this pastor and official board have just been commissioned by the church to secure at once sufficient money to erect and equip one of the largest, finest, and most serviceable church edifices in the denomination?

More encouraging still is the attitude of large numbers of the best informed and most devoted laymen. In the earlier months of special stewardship promotion fear was sometimes felt that the men who sit in the pews might receive somewhat coldly the claims of stewardship, particularly with respect to material possessions. This fear has in no sense been borne out. On the contrary, the most sympathetic and cordial response has been made to the presentation of the stewardship ideal by the laymen and women of the church.

Talking with a prominent churchman not long ago, a lay friend of many years, who counts his fortune in not less than seven figures, he said: "Some of us have been prospered in recent years beyond all expectation. Money has come rolling in upon us. And we do not just understand it, and, worse than that, we do not know how to handle it in the best and wisest way, and we are trying to find out." I believe that in the churches of America to-day are literally tens of thousands of godly men and women who have been prospered in the last ten years beyond their earlier dreams, and that they will, with eagerness and gratitude, welcome any principle which

will show them how to earn, get, increase, invest, handle, spend, and give their money, in such a way as not to curse their own children, blight their own spiritual lives, blunt their moral sensibilities, and injure their neighbors, but will bring honor to God, help to their fellowmen, and blessing to their own lives and the lives of their loved ones. And stewardship provides this principle.

Most illuminating is the record of stewardship experience among the women of the churches. The Woman's Foreign and Home Missionary Societies began under severe handicaps. They were not welcomed with enthusiasm, and their resources were small. The story of their early achievements is therefore a record of small transactions. It was many years before their total contributions assumed noticeable proportions. But they wisely added to their plans for benevolence the principles of Christian stewardship, and emphasized and dwelt upon the importance of proportionate giving in at least the ten-per-cent ratio of the ancient church.

From the beginning of serious emphasis upon this principle their contributions showed a marked increase. In 1918 the two Women's Missionary Societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church had reached the enormous total for the year's giving of $2,400,000. Since that date the general benevolence record of this church has presented many discouraging features, but the giving of these women's societies has moved

rapidly upward, until their total contribution for the year 1926 fell but little short of the amazing sum of $6,000,000! Their explanation of this most creditable history is, "Stewardship."

The place where stewardship enthusiasm was perhaps least expected was among the young people of the church. Youth is ardent and alert, and readily susceptible to the spectacular and the emotional, but "stewardship" is an old-fashioned, vague, uninspiring, theological term, hardly domesticated in our national life or language, and it would scarcely have been surprising if the young people had received it coldly, or turned their backs upon it and fled. But quite the contrary resulted, demonstrating again how superficial has been our general estimate of the idealism and reliability of youth. The appeal which the stewardship ideal, in its most sacrificial forms, made to the youth of to-day was met by a prompt and cordial response, and everywhere multitudes of young men and women enrolled their names as adherents to its most exacting requirements.

And, more encouraging still, they are on all hands giving themselves to the serious and systematic study of the subject. To them it is not a dry and unpractical theme, but one charged with important bearings upon their future lives and destinies, as well as of serious consequences to the faith which they often seem to hold so lightly but really cherish so profoundly. And so, in thousands of young people's societies, and in

scores of summer and winter Institutes, Assemblies, and Conferences, a multitude of young people are giving diligent study, with carefully prepared textbooks and well-trained teachers, to this central theme.

3. Foretelling the Future

The Christian Church, at the present hour, is in a state of mild discouragement, in part because of insufficient means to carry on its legitimate enterprises and expand its program of world conquest. This condition of mental depression, sometimes bordering on a cheerless pessimism, is morally enervating and spiritually unhealthy. It cannot long continue without permanently and balefully affecting the body of Christ. What remedy can be offered in this emergency? Nothing less and nothing other than a widespread conviction, acceptance, and practice of the principles of Christian stewardship, as applied to material possessions.

The United Stewardship Council, consisting of the stewardship executives and workers of the various Protestant denominations of the United States and Canada, has suggested for all Christian people the setting apart of "a definite proportion of income—ordinarily at least a tenth—to extend the kingdom of God." In adopting this standard the United Stewardship Council claims no originality, as already a large majority of the Protestant bodies had adopted a similar standard; it simply regards this suggestion as a move-

ment in unison in the direction in which all have been separately going.

Wherever, observing this standard, Christian stewardship has been conscientiously practiced, it has solved the most baffling problems of church finance. Churches waterlogged with discouragement and sinking under a load of debt have been saved from collapse, given songs of deliverance, and enabled to win unexampled victories for the Kingdom. Vast new community enterprises, magnificent missionary undertakings, large programs of church building, far-reaching evangelistic enterprises, have been made possible through the growth and advancement of stewardship faith and practice.

The enterprising pastor of a medium-sized church in a small Eastern city said to me, not long ago: "I have now been pastor of this church for five years. The first three years my people contributed, in round numbers, to all causes, local and benevolent, thirty-nine thousand dollars; the two following years they contributed sixty-nine thousand dollars." "What could cause so great a difference," I asked, "where the same people, same pastor, same causes, and same pocketbooks were involved?" "Christian stewardship," he replied. "The last two years I was preaching, teaching, and promoting it; and my people were practicing it with perpetual joy."

The frictionless comfort of local church administration, and the enormous saving in man-

power, which this rational and scriptural ideal provides can scarcely be conceived. Where stewardship standards prevail, the average pastor's mental image of an "Official Board" undergoes a wholesome transfiguration. This traditional galaxy of godly but gloomy men, meeting with the pastor once a month, in some dark basement room, tarrying till the wee small hours in anxious, hopeless, or heated discussion as to how to make ends meet and stretch a pitifully inadequate income over the modest needs of the church, begins to take heart and exchange its gloom for joy. Christian stewardship automatically provides for the church's activities and permits the official board to drop the rôle of nurse and undertaker and to assume its place as the pastor's real cabinet, as he presses forward to solve the religious problems and serve the spiritual needs of his community.

Such application of stewardship principles would speedily deliver from hopeless insolvency a multitude of debt-burdened churches. The story of the redemption of Wesley Chapel, Cincinnati, from hopelessness to years of triumphant service, is known wherever religious literature is read. The account of the deliverance of a church at Geneva, New York, from bankruptcy to solvency is scarcely less widespread. But the stories of a multitude of less conspicuous but equally welcome and successful victories are available as corroborative evidence on every hand.

In the early pastoral experience of this writer he found himself in charge of a church which was burdened with by far the heaviest debt in the entire Conference. This debt had been contracted in the building of a splendid new edifice, and at the time seemed wholly justified; but panic had swept the country, fortunes had been dissipated, industry paralyzed, poverty spread broadcast, and the little city in which this church was located reduced to a state of financial collapse. There was widespread fear that the debt upon the church could never be paid, that the trustees would go into bankruptcy, and the building be lost.

In this crisis the principles of tithing-stewardship were recommended, gratefully considered, and in large measure adopted. The next year, to the astonishment of the Conference, the debt was pledged and entirely paid, within a period of six months. Incidentally, as a result of stewardship principles, the congregation paid, the first year of this pastorate, and for the first time in years, its full benevolence apportionment, the largest in its history. The second year the Sunday school and Woman's Missionary Society nearly doubled all former gifts, and the total benevolent offerings far exceeded all apportionments. The third year the debt was canceled.

Stewardship standards of giving will provide for the vast and sorely needed educational program of the church. To illustrate: At a recent nation-wide meeting of benevolence secretaries

and field workers, where earnest consideration was given to problems of larger efficiency and greater economy in promotion, the chairman of the meeting asked of the writer this question:

"What does it cost you to run the Stewardship Department of the church?"

"Approximately twenty thousand dollars a year," I replied.

"What do you do with all that money?"

"It pays the salary of the Stewardship secretary, the assistant secretary, their stenographers, clerks, and other helpers, pays traveling and incidental expenses, and also provides what will surprise many of you secretaries: last year our Stewardship Department did what no church ever did before in the history of the world—we distributed free of expense, on condition of personal and economical use, approximately 100,000,000 pages of Christian stewardship literature."

"Better results could not be produced on any such budget!" exclaimed the chairman.

Up sprang a well-known evangelist.

"I'd like to say a word on this tithing stewardship," he exclaimed. "Not long ago we were having a conference somewhere in New Jersey, and the subject of tithing was under discussion. Two young men came into the audience. They are members of our church, partners in business, and have greatly prospered in recent years, so that they are now receiving a net income of two hundred thousand dollars a year. They had

never thought of tithing, for themselves, but as they listened they were convinced of its appropriateness and desirability. 'That means us,' they said, as they looked at each other. 'Let's do it!' And they pledged themselves to Christian stewardship. So, right here, in the vital decision of one moment," declared the speaker, "two young men laid upon the altar enough to run your entire Stewardship Department, for the entire Methodist Episcopal Church, for an entire year!"

To summarize our thought; the principles of Christian Stewardship will provide ample and overflowing treasuries for all the local and national needs of the church, and underwrite for years to come its most noble and ambitious plans for world evangelization.

Let us take, for illustration, some facts concerning the Methodist Episcopal Church: Recent estimates made by the National Bureau of Economic Research, a source of statistical information uniformly accepted as conservative and reliable, place the total current income of the people of the United States at the enormous figure of $89,682,000,000. This means a current income, per capita, of $770. *The Methodist Year Book* for 1927 (page 271) places the total membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church at 5,173,141. Counting, however, active members only, in the United States (page 259) we find 4,110,572. Assuming, now, that the "average Methodist" receives the "average income"—

and he probably receives no less—we find the estimated income of the total active membership of this church, for the United States only, to be $3,165,140,440.

Supposing, further, for illustration, that every such active member had contributed, in 1926, through the channels of his local church, to its support and benevolent giving, that proportion of his income recommended by the United Stewardship Council and by the *Discipline* of his own church, namely, ten per cent of his income, we discover that the entire church would have given to all causes, of every sort, local support, and national and world-wide benevolence, the astounding sum of $316,514,044, or enough to duplicate every Methodist Episcopal church edifice in the world! The actual giving, however (see *Annual Report* of the World Service Commission, June, 1927), to all causes reported, amounted to only $96,293,290, or 3.0423 per cent instead of ten per cent.

Now, let us summarize and see what we could do with the entire one tenth of income, if we had it:

Income, Methodist Episcopal Church, 1926	$3,165,000,000
Ten per cent of income	316,500,000
The Church gave, for all purposes	96,293,000*
Balance of ten per cent left, after all giving	$220,207,000

*Actual figures below "thousands" disregarded.

With this balance we could now, if we wished, do the following:

Pay every Methodist Episcopal Church debt. (App.)	$32,500,000
Double all 1926 giving to Conference Claimants	2,249,000
Double all World Service contributions, third year	7,705,000
Double all 1926 ministerial salaries, plus house rent	29,311,000
Provide every minister with a $1,000 motor car	16,347,000
Contribute $1,000,000 each to every accredited Methodist college and university	45,000,000
Give each and every active bishop $1,000,000 for his Area	20,000,000
Duplicate every Methodist hospital (78) in the United States	36,190,000
And have left for "loose change" the tidy sum of	30,905,000
Balance of ten per cent, as above	$220,207,000

Or, if preferred, we could contribute this entire balance to the missionary and benevolent activities of the church, in which case we should have enough to duplicate, at one gift, all that the Boards of Foreign and Home Missions, with their predecessor, the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, have given for the world's redemption since the first organization of our missionary work one hundred eight years ago, approximately $154,000,000, and still leave enough money to provide a modest endowment

for every Methodist Episcopal college, university, and hospital in America!

It is fair, of course, to say that a great deal of money is given to benevolent causes every year, by people of all churches, which is not included in their annual reports. But it is also true that an examination of the receipts of all such outside benevolent causes discloses that the gross amount contributed by the people of all the churches, and not included in their own year books, would add but a small percentage to the total giving. Moreover, many cases of "outside giving" are really in the nature of personal obligation or good will, are not in any way related to the promotion of Christ's kingdom, or the exercise of unselfish philanthropy, and should not be regarded as benevolent giving. The best available information supports the belief that the great bulk of Christian benevolence gets final credit through the financial columns of the churches.

With respect to the above tables it is also fair to say that not all statisticians estimate the national income as high as does the National Bureau of Economic Research, though many would place it even higher. The very lowest estimate we have received, and one considerably below that of other recently published statistics, is that of the National Industrial Conference Board, which places the total current income at $78,649,000,000, and the per capita income at $671.43. This ratio, however, if correct, would

make but a small percentage of difference in our total results, while the figures we have used would probably be accepted by a much larger proportion of statisticians. In any event such figures can never be anything other than rather accurate estimates, and their presentation here is purely illustrative.

Meanwhile it is interesting to note that the estimated income of the members of this church, in the United States, exceeds by nearly $2,000,000 the total output of motor vehicles in 1923, is equal to three quarters of all the gold produced in the last one hundred years, is more than a third of the value of all farm crops in 1925, more than a third of all savings bank deposits for the same year, almost a third of the total money in the United States, gold, silver, and paper in 1924, and almost a third the value of all homes owned in this country; while the tithe of this Methodist income equals four fifths of all the gold produced in the whole world in the year 1924!

In the face of all this it is astounding to know that, for lack of needful funds, the educational enterprises of this great denomination are passing through a crucial test, that its Sunday school and young people's work is severely handicapped, the forward progress of its hospital development threatened, its church extension enterprises suspended, its work for temperance curtailed, its missions to immigrants crippled, and, for the first time in a hundred years, a re-

treat in its foreign missionary campaign in full progress all along the line. When the intelligent and truly consecrated membership of this great church at last awakens to a full realization of the enormous discrepancy between its giving ability at this favored period in the world's history, and its actual performance, in this time of greatest opportunity and most desperate need, it is impossible to doubt that such a radical change in interest and devotion will take place as will ultimately revolutionize the church's attitude toward its divine calling and the Great Commission.

4. Abetting the Inevitable

Since our Christian optimism, and our faith in the ultimate triumph of God's plans, unfalteringly assure us that Christ "shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied," that the answer to the prayer the Master taught the whole world of his discipleship, "Thy kingdom come," is long overdue, let us promptly put to ourselves the question, "How may the individual Christian most effectually contribute to this consummation?" Or, to place before ourselves the problem in concrete form: "How can we who believe in the more obvious and sacrificial phases of stewardship more successfully promote its realization through the church?"

We can do so by bearing frequent and unqualified testimony to our faith. No other method of propagating truth is so effective as

that which registers personal faith and personal experience. "What we have felt and seen, with confidence we tell," and such confidence is contagious. And it is in most cases as acceptable as it is contagious. Neither in the experiences of the early church or of the modern missionary field, however frequent the outbursts of persecution, do we discover much opposition to the testimony borne by personal experience. What one actually knows is as privileged as it is convincing. All this gives special weight and value to pulpit and private commendation of Christian stewardship and its results in personal and local church life. If the pastor and the individual disciple who have tested and proved these principles will prepare themselves to give timely and frequent expression to the faith that is in them, the hour is not far distant when the assurance of its truth and universality will be generally acknowledged.

We can do so by making the stewardship ideal a systematic reality in our own giving and by encouraging our neighbor to do the same. The first natural reaction against the invitation to contribute, for example, the tenth of one's income is the feeling that such proportion is impossible, that, as things now stand, in the case of the average individual or family, the entire income is already demanded for personal and family necessities, and cannot possibly be encroached upon, even though the provision for benevolence be regretfully small. It is important

that this conclusion, so mistaken in the average case, be promptly removed. And it can be most effectively removed by an appeal to and demonstration of the fact that the average American income is ample for all the legitimate needs of the normal life. With abnormal and exceptional cases of poverty or inability, now happily so rare, we have little to do. They may in most cases be safely left to work themselves out. "What is that to thee? Follow thou me," is wise counsel in the face of such objection.

In the postwar period a serious problem, in the case of several European countries, was that of financial rehabilitation together with the payment of war debts. Our American bankers responded: "Balance your national budget. Plan your expenditures in advance, in view of your expected income, and spend accordingly." To this counsel Germany listened, and her prosperity is already astounding. To this counsel France gave ear, and her franc went up so fast as to cause alarm. Precisely this counsel is needed by American families and by Christian individuals, and should be conscientiously offered from every pulpit.

"Balance your budget" would be a safe and wholesome watchword for all our people to-day. The land is prosperous, the fields are bountiful, production is abundant, comfort and plenty are everywhere. Suppose we make an honest attempt to fairly and equitably adjust our expenditure. In America to-day we all have and spend

something for comfort, something for personal advancement, something for pleasure, probably something for luxury, and possibly something, rather small, for religion. Suppose, now, each disciple should consider carefully in advance his personal or family budget appropriations, and should plan to subtract a little from luxury, from pleasure, and, if necessary, which is most improbable, even from personal comfort, adding these small margins to his appropriation for religion; it is evident that his contribution to religion would be enormously increased, his other interests affected but slightly, and his health, moral safety, happiness, and benevolence decidedly augmented, even though there should be no increase in income.

There are doubtless some cases of misfortune, illness, or poverty where the honest reply could be: "I have already cut to the bone every necessity, and still I see no possible way to provide the suggested proportion for benevolence. How can it be done?" The answer is,"No man knows." It is impossible to say that any particular individual should, or to tell him how he can, so plan his affairs as to offer the normal tribute to his King. It is impossible to understand how it has already been done in thousands of cases, cases of impoverished ministers, hard-pressed missionaries, poor widows, orphan students, Korean, Chinese and Indian converts; it is enough that it has been done and still is being done in the vast majority of such cases. Any disciple whose

confidence in his Lord is sufficient to enable him to appropriate as his own the promise of Jesus: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, . . . and all these things shall be added unto you," has already received the first and most needful answer to his question.

We can advance this desirable consummation by turning our eyes toward the wan and spirit-starved peoples of the world, and trying to put ourselves in their place. If we can glimpse the needs, and feel the weight of the sins of the world, we shall not long resist the call to share our bounteous gifts to fill their need.

William F. Oldham, now bishop, walking one day upon the Indian Road, found a gang of laborers mending the highway. Addressing the foreman he engaged him in conversation about his work, and, with Oriental freedom, asked what wages he received. Feeling a sense of his importance, and doubtful if the magnitude of his compensation would be credited by his questioner, the foreman began to prepare the bishop for the news by calling attention to the dignity of his foremanship, the size of the gang, the fact that the highway was a government project and the needs of his large family. At last he was ready proudly to reply.

"Ten cents a day."

"And these other men, how much do they get?"

"Five and six cents a day."

"Now," said the Bishop, "you must be a very prosperous man."

"Yes, we have a brass water jar, several earthen ones, and a good rug."

"You are indeed prosperous. But now tell me, my man, if I should offer you fifteen dollars for all you have, what would you say?"

"Try me for five," exclaimed the man.

"Now," said the Bishop, "if I could offer you anything in the world that you might ask, what would you have?"

The man paused for a moment, glanced upward with the yearning look of an infinitely hungry soul, and replied: "Oh, sir, that my soul might find her path to the gods!" No heavenly Father, as we know him, no divinely compassionate Jesus, only Siva, and Krishna, and Ganesh, and the other sanguinary gods of India did he know, but even so the poor man's soul longed for the heavenly fellowship for which the sons of men were fashioned. If once we can but fully sense that hunger, in behalf of our fellow men, we cannot long resist the Spirit's call to offer ourselves as "good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

ASK YOURSELF ANOTHER

Questions Like These Will Set You Thinking

1. Is Christian service speculative? Is it more than that?
2. How many phases of stewardship can you point out in the story of Bill MacDonald?
3. How do you account for Bill's prosperity?
4. Is Bill's spiritual condition an outgrowth of his stewardship, or does his stewardship result from his spiritual ideals?
5. How has Bill promoted foreign missions, aside from his giving? home missions?
6. What is the most commendable feature of the "Potomac" man's stewardship?
7. Aside from his giving how has he exhibited his sense of stewardship?
8. What varying phases of stewardship did the New Hampshire preacher's widow illustrate?
9. Name some results of the stewardship of this devout couple. Is the sense of stewardship evident in their children? Illustrate.
10. What is meant by "net income"?
11. Mention evidences of stewardship in the case of the "Mother who never forgot."
12. Has the church a stewardship responsibility in providing wholesome literature for the family? How does it discharge this stewardship? How could it be further improved?
13. Would you regard this mother as rather strict in her religious requirements? Would a more careful observance of these scruples be advantageous to modern disciples?
14. Characterize the stewardship of the widow by the wayside.
15. Enlarge on the sort of stewardship suggested in the mid-Victorian party. Mention unfulfilled opportunities of brothers and sisters.
16. How well have your teachers discharged their stewardship to you? Have students a reciprocal duty toward their teachers?
17. What instances of faithfulness do you find in the story of the great professor?

18. What, in your judgment, is the finest service he rendered his student?

19. Describe the church of your childhood. Enumerate the helpful influences you received from it.

20. How can the church increase its influence and helpfulness with the young? What can youth contribute to the church?

21. What does the community owe to the church? What does the church owe to the community?

22. What explains the spiritual blessing received by the young man who did not get to the altar?

23. Are definite religious experiences common to-day? Possible? Desirable? On what conditions?

24. Is a "youth movement" of the sort described here possible to-day? Why, or why not?

25. Name some admirable characteristics of the young heroine.

26. What lessons in co-operation does this story teach?

27. What application of stewardship does the "Good Shepherd" incident suggest?

28. What characteristics of "Johnny" fitted him for the ministry? Would you conclude that, because he had only small churches, he was mistaken as to his call? Do you believe the service of obscure churches worthy of the investment of a man's talents?

29. If you suspected that you were called to the ministry, or the mission field, what would you do? How would you determine whether or not you were called of God?

30. From "Mr. A's" experiences, tell how a congregation may increase the influence and success of its minister. Is there a "Stewardship of Charity"?

31. How did this pastor show his wisdom? Sincerity? Devotion?

32. Should pastors, and others, press the duty of decision for Christ? Is this more likely to be overdone or underdone? What has been your experience?

33. What admirable qualities do you find in the "inquisitive superintendent"?

34. What was his probable influence on the young minister?

35. Enumerate the instances of faithful stewardship in the "encounter with the bishop."

36. How does your own attitude toward strangers or inferiors square with the bishop's conduct?

37. What would have happened if this pastor had missed his opportunity?

38. List the men and women who have been the most spiritually helpful in your life. Have you ever told them? Why not?

39. What different lessons can we learn from Bishop Ninde's midnight adventure? What phases of stewardship are here illustrated?

40. Is there a "Stewardship of Timeliness"? "Of Tact"? "Of Diplomacy"? "Of Thoroughness"? "Of Perseverance"?

41. Would the example of this good bishop, faithfully followed by all the members of our church, favorably affect our membership statistics?

42. Can you give a list of successful "soul winners"? What were their methods? Have you fairly tried this work?

43. Can one's Christian life be stable and positive, and yet undergo change and progress?

44. What is your notion of "salvation"? Who, in your judgment, are the saved?

45. What do you understand by "sanctification"? What is the attitude of your church on this doctrine? Is it an ideal to be cherished?

46. What are the tendencies and perils of exclusive attention to isolated ideals?

47. Show how stewardship blends and crowns all the high ideals mentioned here.

48. Has the church a stewardship of responsibility to study the nature and needs of boys and girls? What do the experiences of Joey and Jim suggest?

49. Have you a neglected "Stewardship of the Second Chance"?

50. What examples of stewardship do you find in the "tithing sexton." How did his stewardship bear fruit?

51. Should people on small incomes be exempt from proportionate giving? Why, or why not?

52. What factors worked to produce success in the church in the Northwest? Instances of stewardship there displayed?

53. Has your church carried out a stewardship campaign? Has it given the plan of tithing a fair trial?

54. How extensive would be the influence and power of stewardship, broadly understood, if made universal among men?

55. What is here called the "Fallacy of Divisibility"? What about the stewardship of the ten tenths?

56. Is stewardship a divine or a human ideal? What does it mean? How would you illustrate it? Is it old, or new, and in what sense? Why is it timely at this hour?

57. Some illustrations of stewardship's growing influence and acceptability?

58. Some achievements of stewardship? Illustrate its possibilities. Its need.

59. How can we best promote this great principle? What are we willing to do? What great motive should actuate us?

60. Have you tried to interest your friends in stewardship? Why not tell them these stories? Or lend them your book? Or give them a copy? Why not remember a group of friends at Christmas? Or on birthdays?

61. What stewardship books and other literature have you read?

62. Do you know the name of the authorized study textbook of your denomination?

63. Do you know where to send for stewardship information and literature? Have you the address of the Stewardship Department of your own church?

64. What is a "Stewardship Seminar"? Have you, or has your pastor, organized one? What is a School of Stewardship?

65. Have you ever attended a Stewardship Study Class? Ever organized one?

66. What is a Stewardship Reading Contest? How is it organized and conducted? What books should be used?

67. What is a Fellowship of Stewardship? What is the "Christian Stewardship Guild"? Are you a member?

68. What is the "United Stewardship Council"? What Religious Denominations are included in it?

69. How much, in general, do you know about the great subject of stewardship? Would you care to know more? Why not send to your denominational stewardship headquarters for literature and information?